The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Samuel H. Miller:

Gethsemane and Faith

Richard Luecke • Resurrection and the Life

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OTTO A. PIPER • CHRISTIANS ARE DIFFERENT

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Easter Prayer

O THOU who didst make the stars and turn the shadow of death into the morning, we praise thee for the coming of spring, for the resurrection of Jesus' spirit over pain and death and for the assurance that Easter brings to our lives.

With the opening of flowers and the hallelujahs of praise, we know that our loved ones who have passed through the gateway of death live with thee in a more abiding world. Because of His conquest, we know that love is immortal; that death is only a horizon, and a horizon is only the limit of our earthly sight. Lift our vision, that we may see beyond the changes of time to the things that never pass away.

Give us faith to realize that every truth that is trampled down by evil and every ideal that seems to be buried in darkness will rise again. We know that right will prevail over wrong and life will overcome death. Awaken our minds to the glory of Easter morning. As Jesus conquered the shadows of the tomb, so may we overcome the evils that keep our lives from being what they should be. Attune our thoughts to songs of victory, that we may be one with the company of those who live with thee in eternal joy. Amen. — *Robert M. Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

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Memo:

HOW DO YOU measure goodness in news? By what standard do you assess goodness and badness in events? T. S. Matthews, once the editor of *Time,* says in *The Sugar Pill,* a book about British journalism, that goodness in news must be measured by the best news that was ever told — the news of the resurrection. The tidings which broke upon the world on the first Easter morning set the ultimate standard for determining goodness, the standard of everlasting life.

In this event the attitude of God toward the human race was finally established beyond question. We had done our worst. We crucified the Son of God on a cross between two thieves. We descended to the lowest evil by killing him who was sent to save us, answering love with hatred, life with death. We contrived to arrange the time and the occasion when if ever God would reject us eternally and leave us to the fate unforgiven sin deserves.

A few years ago Winston Churchill asked: "What ought we to do? Which way shall we turn to save our lives and the future of the world? It does not matter much to old people. They are going soon anyway. But I find it poignant to look at youth in all its activities and ardor, and most of all to watch little children playing their merry games and wonder what would lie before them if God wearied of mankind." If God had ever become weary of mankind, he would have wearied when Jesus was crucified.

The resurrection gave mankind the news that God had not abandoned mankind and would never abandon us. This is the best of all possible news particularly in these days when annihilation is possible for the civilized world. To know now that "God is for us," that when sin and death have done their worst God does not "weary of mankind," makes a mighty difference. It compels us to join in the exultant shout: "Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We do not know what the future will bring and we need not be anxious about it. But we know what God has done in history and we know especially that his act of raising Jesus Christ from the dead made all the difference. "That mighty event is faith's assurance," said a World Council group, "that Christ has overcome the world and all the powers of sin and death; it is the beginning of a new life in the power of the spirit; it is the guarantee of God's promise that in his own good time his victory will be manifest to all, his kingdom come in glory, and he himself be everywhere known as king. It therefore begets a living hope. Our hope comes to us from God and rests in God."

Christian conviction that God has not and will not abandon mankind centers in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The victory and happiness of the early church, whose members also lived in daily communion with death, can be our victory and happiness today. In this joyful faith we can carry on our work without panic or fear right in the center of nuclear targets from which we know there can be no escape if war breaks out. We can witness to the power and love of God to save sinners. We can strive for a just and compassionate social order. We can relieve what is possible of the world's pain and tragedy. We can speak the truth in love in spite of an atmosphere of dissimulation. We can work for freedom and peace. We can maintain serenity and inward composure in the faith of the resurrection, proclaiming by our spirit and bearing the faith by which we live and will forever live.

This contemporary power of the resurrection is bound up with the truth that it was the *person* of Jesus Christ which was resurrected and lives today. It is ourselves as persons who may, by God's grace, hope for resurrection after death. This is something more than an immortality of influence, through other people or through institutions; more than the idea that the soul lives on as a wavelet on God's ocean of mind or spirit. It is the good news that the power of God which raised Jesus Christ can raise us up if we believe and repent. It is the resurrection faith which lighted up the first-century world and which today can illumine a planet standing in peril of wholesale destruction. It cries in triumph: "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." What wonderful news!

Harold F. Fay

Gethsemane and Faith

By Samuel H. Miller

HOW accustomed we have become to all the incidents of the life of Jesus our Lord! How easy it is to pass these by as if they were merely murals on the wall! They no longer shock us or cause us to catch our breath in sudden recognition of pain. They have become ecclesiastical accessories, useful for all sorts of clever homiletical experiments. It is possible now to go through the story of the ordeal of Gethsemane without coming near the anguish and heartsickness of Jesus. Yet the overtones are there, if we will linger long enough to hear them. He said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful. Wait here and watch with me." He went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And he turned back to the disciples and found them asleep and he said to them, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He went away again and prayed, saying, "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." And he came and found them asleep again for their eyes were heavy, and he left them and went away and prayed the third time saying the same thing. A simple story but heart-shaking!

Surely one ought never to get the idea that this kind of experience is foreign to the religious man. Whenever one hears people speaking glibly to those who are suffering, saying, "Don't worry, everything is all right," one has the feeling that the man who keeps his mouth shut in spiritual modesty is much nearer Jesus than the addle-brained sentimentalist who wants to whistle himself and everybody else into a state of euphoria. Gethsemane and the cross of Jesus Christ stand as living witnesses against that kind of superficiality which parades itself as if it were religious just because, ostrich like, it blindly refuses to look at the tragedy and heartsickness that stand at the center of life and cry aloud from every cross of the world, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

This is part of religion; to deny it denies th very heart and soul of our humanity and also strangely enough, of our faith in God. If al things are so patently right and proper, then ther is no deep, fundamental need for faith. We nee only smack a smile on our faces and keep grinning

No Escape from Tragedy

It seems to me that the first characteristic o religion at any time and in any place is that it eyes are open, wide open, to every tragic situation of the world. It never hoodwinks itself in trying to believe things about the world that are not so It looks at the cross and by no kind of abracadabra does it cancel it out of existence and say it is unreal. It admits it, carries it, and tries somehow to enter into its meaning. Certainly the heart of a religious man must be honest. There is no escape from Gethsemane or Calvary. There is no escape from the tragic nature of life itself. As Goethe said, no one knows life until they discover it is tragic. If it is not tragic, then there is no truth to the Bible itself or to the Christian faith which assumes there is a need for salvation in such life. The Bible and salvation lose their relevance, fade, disappear into the distance in any other view of things, and in place of them we learn to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps of superficial optimism or cooperative methods of social security and insurance.

I heard a man not long ago say that he had reached the point in his faith where he held almost in contempt men who had any doubt or uncertainty about God and Christianity. I cannot quite understand what he could have meant. Is there a human soul who stands deeply in the midst of life itself in all of its anguish, in all its crosscurrents, in all its uncertainties and confusion, in all its contradictions, in all the catastrophies and tragedies that happen, who does not have heart-shaking doubts, so that like Jesus he would sweat drops of blood in some Gethsemane of his own and perchance in some darkness of his soul cry out, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Not to understand this is fundamentally not to understand the Bible.

We are not perverse if we confront the reality of Gethsemane; we are not perverse deniers of

SAMUEL H. MILLER, *a graduate of Colgate University, has held three pastorates in New Jersey and, since 1935, has been minister of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is now professor of pastoral theology at the Harvard Divinity School. His latest book,* Prayers for Daily Use, *was published by Harper in 1957.*

God if upon some cross of the world we cry out in anguish and desolation; we are not mere perverse deniers if in all the embarrassment of our own soul we admit our own uncertainties and wonder what the meaning of it all is. The eyes of religion, as far as I can see them in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, are wide open. The anguish of man's ordeal is made unforgettably plain in Jacob, in Abraham and Isaac, in Job, in Hosea and Jeremiah, in Jesus, and in Paul and Peter. They know that until a man takes up his cross, he is not acquainted with his own life!

What can be said about this fundamental residuum of mystery and uncertainty and tragedy? At the outset one must say there are some questions that torment us which could be answered by more intellectual light. To love God with our understanding is as essential as loving him with our hearts. To exercise our brains to the utmost of their ability is part of salvation's work. Confusion which can be clarified ought not to be taken for ultimate mystery. One of the most unfortunate things in religion is that it is assumed at times that the life of the mind is antagonistic to the life of the soul. This is untrue. Man is whole and ought to understand as deeply as possible all of the experiences that come to him.

Some Problems Solvable

Moreover, it seems to me that some problems of life can be resolved by deeper spiritual experience. One of the saddest things in the Christianity of our day, especially in Protestantism where every individual feels he has a sort of papal infallibility just because he happens to be free from any kind of authority, is to think that if he has not reached an answer at the level of his own experience, there is no answer. This obviously is pathetic. The ideal of having been baptized, having entered into the church and then continuing to hammer out on the anvil of one's soul deeper and stronger convictions about the nature of the life we live, does not seem to have entered very deeply into the Protestant way of life. Here is an hour of worship; if there were some method by which we could tell how we have progressed from year to year, it would be of a tremendous assistance to us. Have we really found a higher level for what we do in this one hour of the week when we come together? Or are we attacking the problem of life at the level of worship we arrived at twenty years ago? Life's problems will depend in their solution on whether or not we are able to deepen our spiritual understanding as well as our intellectual understanding. And if we can come into a profounder spiritual experience, some of the tangles and difficulties of our Gethsemanes and Calvarys may indeed have light thrown upon them.

Finally, it would seem to me that we might show more respect for the past. Even in a church where the Bible is deeply honored, it would almost seem that individualism and the heights of technological advancement have smothered our profoundest reverence for the kind of experience and understanding which men of previous ages reached. We do not seem to understand that when we raced off in such a hysterical frenzy to solve the cosmic problems of the world scientifically and technologically, we were also depriving ourselves of both the time and the energy to solve the human problems existentially and spiritually. And in terms of spiritual maturity we are far below the level reached by men who dwelled in Bedouin tents in the wilderness three thousand years ago. Many of the vital impulses of life in the depth of the soul have atrophied for multitudes of men who are acute, extremely alert and brilliant at the point where technological and mechanical processes are involved. Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Paul — these men could still stand in our midst and be head and shoulders above everything we think we understand and that we are now able to experience with our distracted, disintegrated inner lives. We need more respect for the men who wrote the Bible; and after the Bible was written, for those who contrived the great creeds of Christendom; and after the creeds had been contrived, for those who built a church in which beauty and grandeur united with man's devotion and love for Almighty God. Nothing would prove our humility to be sincere more than the understanding that we do not stand at the heights of history, but like everybody else in history, on the common earth, suffering the same problems, and seeking under God the faith that we might handle them well.

Essential Mystery

Let us turn again to Jesus and the story of Gethsemane. It seems to me that here we confront a deeper level where problems are not fundamentally resolved. There is essential mystery here, not merely confusion. The first thing to say about this is that if anything is indicated undeniably in this experience of Jesus, it is not to side-step the problem, but to wrestle with it. Do not expect and do not accept an easy answer. Keep in mind Abraham laying Isaac on the sacrificial altar; hold your imagination to Jacob wrestling through the long night until he was able to walk without a limp; hold the book of Job in your heart, and if you are afraid to say the things that Job said, then read his words, whose boldness before God has been such that few of us would dare to say them to God. And if these are not sufficient, then stand where the disciples stood, near the Garden of Gethsemane, and in silence see a man who would not side-step, who would not call a bad thing good, who would not try to take the easy way through, who pled with God that if the cup could pass from him, let it pass, who was honest of heart and sincere of emotion, and in this respect was fit to be the Savior of men who are caught in the same dark spot.

Perhaps no more critical judgment can be made of the contemporary church than its failure to respect suffering. Essentially it is sentimental about it, not serious. It tries to get rid of it, to hide it, to cover it up, to sweeten it, to compensate

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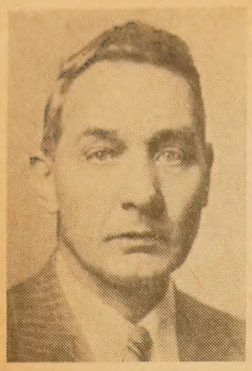

By Otto A. Piper

CHRISTIANS

THE First Epistle of Saint Peter is addressed to new converts whose former way of life still shows forth under the new Christian garment. Our situation seems to be quite different. Most of us were born into Christian families and the life of the church. But faith is not an innate faculty. What we inherit is the tradition of our church, rather than faith, and it is in and through that tradition that faith must develop. Thus the actual difference between those early Christians and ourselves is not so great as one might think at first, and if there is any at all, it is probably to their advantage. For what difference is there in our days between a Christian and the man living next door, who does not want to have anything to do with the church or Christianity? Or does public opinion see any essential difference between him and us? When a crime has been committed or a scandal has broken loose, the newspapers refrain from indicating whether or not the person involved was a Christian. The editor does not think that faith makes any difference in these matters. Do we? Sometimes we want to make a real effort to act like Christians, and then we work, e.g., for international peace, racial equality and social justice. But amazingly enough we soon discover that we find ourselves in the company of non-Christians, Jews, idealists, and humanists. Obviously no Christian motivation is necessary for such activities. What difference then does faith make?

Our text emphasizes four points. First of all there is a real difference between the things non-Christians like to do, on the one hand, and a life lived by the will of God on the other. Secondly, in order to live that kind of life, we must know ourselves, and in particular the nature of sin. Thirdly, we must assume our responsibility and accept the judgment of God. Fourthly, our final destiny will be determined by our perspective o life.

While we may not clearly realize what it i that distinguishes the life of faith from that of th rest of the world, those outside often sense th difference very promptly. No matter how im perfect and rudimentary our Christian life ma be, it has a quality which they dislike. They ma not express their displeasure in the outspoke and violent way as was done in the early centurie of the Christian era or in countries where Chris tians are in a minority. In this country it wil manifest itself in the first place in the fact that i public life the Christian life is considered a mat ter which it would be tactless to mention, or whe reference to it is made, it is to its peripheral manifestations only. The death of a Pope and th ceremonies at the inthronement of his successo will make headlines and fill the pages of the illus trated magazines. But see how silent the same radio and TV stations or the big magazines are about the people who set shining examples of a Christian life!

The Christian Differentia

The Apostle points out that people are sur prised that we should not join them in their ways of life. Rightly are they amazed because they notice that we, too, wish to live in conformity with the rest of the social stratum to which we belong. They fail to see that even in a secularized church the members still have certain inhibitions which prevent them from going the whole way with their neighbors. Our differentia as Christians does not so much lie in what we do but in the manner in which we look at life. To those to whom God is a reality and Jesus Christ the bringer of their salvation, everything appears in a new light. We may not like, e.g., to pay taxes — after all, who does? — and we probably try to hold back as much money as possible for ourselves and our children. Nevertheless, we feel that our property is a divine gift. No matter how hard we worked to make some money, the merit is not ours. Others, too, have worked, and perhaps more strenuously than we, yet failed. Thus we feel a special responsibility which transcends all limits of class and race and nation for people who are in need of help. Similar-

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ARE DIFFERENT

ly, we may agree with our contemporaries that the Victorian age's fear of sex was unjustified and that sex is something natural and not immoral by itself. But we do not conclude from that fact that the sexual desire has a right to be satisfied whenever it makes itself felt, because we believe that people of different sex are destined to attain to full personal communion with each other. Likewise, we cannot deny the fact that in a Christian family, too, adolescent children will rebel against their parents. But when it is a Christian family, they will, nevertheless, show a certain respect for their parents, because they feel in some way that their parents were given them by God. Our faith, if it should serve no other purpose, at least imparts some depth to our life, which contrasts strongly with the shallowness that characterizes life without religion.

Knowledge of Ourselves

The Christians to whom Peter wrote probably did not differ much from us. They were, and yet they were not, truly Christian. Having inherited a Christian religion they practiced it because their teachers and preachers had done the same thing. Peter insists, however, that they should become aware of their faith and consciously draw practical consequences from it.

Why is it that as a rule our Christian life looks so much like that of our non-Christian environment? Peter enumerates two reasons. To begin with, we consider the life of the people around us as normal and natural for no other reason but that they are in the majority. The modern belief in statistical methods and the widespread reliance on public opinion polls forms, as it were, the scientific basis for conformism. Thus the late Dr. Kinsey in his reports on sexual behavior in the U.S. seriously entertained the view that whatever sexual perversion was indulged in by more than 50 per cent of the people consulted could be considered normal and justified.

Christians cannot wholeheartedly adopt the standards and mores of their neighbors, because they cannot practice their faith without remembering that they are God's elect and a chosen people. Apart from the gracious interest that God takes in us we would not and could not be ourselves. If, nevertheless, we show such a strong leaning towards the ways of the many, a powerful pull must operate in our lives. Peter has discovered its secret: it is our natural fear of suffering. This is the second reason for our conformism. How could a Christian ever forget that he, whose name he bears, suffered for him in the flesh! Yet unfortunately we fail to understand the necessity of his suffering.

Like other New Testament writers Peter applies to the analysis of human nature the concepts of flesh and Spirit. In this context flesh does not designate the muscles, nerves and sinews only, which form the human body, but rather man in his totality of body and mind, and, thus as a particle of this world. Living in the flesh, man in all situations feels a desire to comply with the necessities and needs of his life here on earth, and since life is impossible without the interaction of the self and the world, these necessities cannot be completely ignored. But when our relation to this world becomes the dominant factor in our motivation, instead of being but the occasion from which our actions start, happiness and success appear the supreme goals to be reached, and their absence is taken as an indication that our life moves in the wrong direction. Whenever this outlook is shared by Christians — as is so often the case — they neglect the fact that they are not merely flesh, i.e., part of this world, but also have the Spirit, that is to say the ability to see and interpret their lives in the light of a divine purpose.

Failure to make this outlook dominant in their lives has, according to Peter, rendered the recipients of his letter unable to understand the work of Christ. While they are aware of his suffering, the significance of his passion is minimized in their minds, since it is interpreted merely as a temporary defeat whose horrors are eclipsed by the glory of his resurrection. The result is the kind of Christology which is so common among us. In it, the Christ in whom we believe is above all the King of Heaven who reigns in his omnipotent power and who therefore can be trusted to turn all human affairs to our advantage when we pray to him. Peter sees things differently. To him such an outlook is the pathetic evidence of the unbroken sway which sin still holds over us. We may not indulge in some of the gross vices which Peter

mentions in this passage, such as sexual and alcoholic excesses, and lack of discipline in our conduct, but in our pursuit of ethical goals we still strive for happiness and success and thus remain fettered by this world.

In order fully to understand Peter's own Christology it is necessary to alter slightly the translation of verse one. It should read: "Since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, you should adopt the same outlook for your fight, realizing that through suffering he had overcome the claim of sin." Peter does not contend that suffering is by itself a good thing. The "for us" which the American Version adds to the first "suffered" in verse one expresses the meaning of the writer, even though it may not have been in the original text. The Apostle wants to remind his readers that Jesus had accepted his suffering as a divine obligation laid upon him on account of the sinfulness of mankind. It was not the superior power of his adversaries that nailed him upon the cross, for it would have been easy for Jesus at any time to flee away. Rather as the Son of Man he had to challenge and to incapacitate the powers of evil in this world, especially sin, and thus he had to combat in particular those of their champions, who disguised their sinfulness behind the cloak of religious zeal, i.e., the Pharisees and the priests of Israel. God did not want them to be silenced by force, however, but rather to be unmasked in their false belief. That could be accomplished only by one who to the last minute was obedient to the will of God, no matter what his adversaries would inflict upon him.

Our Accountability

Thus understood the suffering of Jesus has a twofold significance. As far as his own life was concerned, his passion was the definite end of the power of sin tempting him. For the rest of mankind, however, his voluntary suffering and death was the ultimate proof that notwithstanding the narrow ties by which our physical and mental life is attached to this earth, human life is not only destined for a higher goal than the satisfaction of our biological and practical needs and desires, but also that the goal can be reached here on earth. Thus death for Jesus was not an ultimate end as was the case for the power of sin that operated on him; for him acceptance of the passion was the way to full communion with the Father and thus entrance into unending glory. In Peter's eyes the suffering of Jesus is therefore not so much a vicarious sacrifice which the deity performs for man's redemption as it is the revelation of the basic law underlying God's redemptive work. Christ's example admonishes us to oppose the forces of evil, wherever we encounter them, yet not by using the means people commonly use to meet their challenge. For the majority of people are interested primarily in warding off the harm they might suffer. In contrast to them the example of Jesus teaches us to overcome the forces of evil by doing the good in disregard of their hostility.

The greatness of the gospel lies in the fact that it calls human beings into the orbit of a heaven project. We are not told that by the past wo of Christ we have been saved, but rather that by we can be saved, and that it is God's will that shall be saved. That is implied in the fact th God's saving work was inaugurated by Christ a human life like ours. But once we have realiz that what made Jesus suffer was his strict adheren to a divine law of human conduct rather tha his inferior power, we are no longer free to choo our own way in life. We too must acknowled that all the opposition we encounter, when we li in accordance with God's will, can be overcon only when irrespective of the harmful cons quences we are willing for the rest of our sojour in this world to live that life of service and lo for which God has destined us.

We are privileged in that the gospel has bee proclaimed to us, while hundreds of millio in this world are in complete ignorance of it. B this privilege makes us in a special way accountab for what we do with the opportunities offered t us. Our final destiny is not settled by the fact tha we heard the gospel and liked it, but rather b our response of faith, and the latter is a lifelon affair whose genuineness will come to light in th Final Judgment. Hence the resurrection of Chri is for us not only the guarantee of life everlastin but also the reminder that no man will be able t escape God's judgment, because death is not th final end of man's life.

I do not imagine that the first readers of Peter letter liked our passage. Probably they found hi admonition too hard to be followed, and utterl unrealistic. Yet they would hardly have kept an copied his letter, unless at a second reading the would have realized not only the deep truth im plied in it, but also the tenderness of his pedagog ical approach. First of all the Apostle does no say: as Christians you must suffer for the gospel' sake. Rather he makes them realize that thus fa they had taken a view of life in this world whic was inconsistent with the gospel. In dealing wit their neighbors they had acted as though Christ' work concerned their inner life only and ha nothing to do with the conditions of this world Perhaps being cognizant of pagan myths whic told of gods who were murdered and had die only to come to life again, they interpreted th fate of Jesus in the same way. Since their contem poraries hoped to obtain new and lasting life by participating in the ritual of these religions, thei beliefs had no influence upon their practical life

Over against such mythical views Peter em phasizes the particular nature of Jesus' suffering It was not a fate which befell him from the outside but rather the consequence of his voluntary ac ceptance of God's redemptive plan. Furthermore Jesus was not concerned with mortality as such but rather with the reason for man's death, viz., his sinfulness. Most important, however, he was motivated by love for a mankind whose life was devoid of real meaning. Sharing this outlook on

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"No One Who Puts His Trust in Thee Will Ever Be Confounded"

The Resurrection and the Life

By Richard Luecke

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world." John 11:25-27.

LET US begin today on the level of our ordinary discourse. What do we commonly take to be the topic of Easter, and what do we commonly say about it? More often than not, we take its topic to be the eventuality of death, and then we talk about the possibility of a life after death. This may prove not to be the best way of putting the topic of Easter and it may limit what we are able to say today. Nevertheless, that is where we are and that is where we will begin.

Do we not find ourselves saying one or the other of two things? On the one hand, many of us simply assume or at least glibly affirm a "resurrection of the dead" or more likely a "life after death" or most likely "some form of immortality." We repeat such phrases to ourselves when we think of our own death, and to one another when we stand beside one just dead because we hope it is so. We repeat them because many religions, including our own religion, have taught that it is so. We may even use analogies from nature or arguments from psychology or demonstrations from certain philosophies or passages from the New Testament to show that it is so.

But when we talk in this way we are not yet talking about the faith of Easter nor about the faith of which Jesus speaks in the words ascribed to him in this passage. This much should be clear to all who have followed Jesus through the obedience of his life and passion to the revealing tragedy of his death: he did not come merely to assure mankind that after a life of comfort (and of comfortable speculation) they will also enjoy a pleasant hereafter. What would happen in the life of any man who *really* believed in a resurrection? It is only when something *has* happened in the life of a man that he may *effectively* affirm it. Therefore in our passage Jesus does not speak simply about the resurrection; he speaks about "the resurrection and the life."

On the other hand there are those of us who, when we talk about it, deny "survival" or "immortality." The natural evidence is that consciousness ceases with the physical organism on which consciousness seems to depend. Each falling hair and each decaying tooth reminds us that we will not last forever and not even for long. What is the necessity for a surviving "soul"? Anyway, how should we ever recognize ourselves or *be* ourselves without a body? We may even object that the prospect of such endless living would take goal and purpose out of life and result in tedium and boredom.

"Flesh and Bone"

It might be noted that such objections attach more directly to theories of immortality than to the Christian affirmation of "the resurrection of the body." But what *must* be noted is that once again we have only a quite bloodless speculation or inquiry. This may be only half of life and a distraction from other demands of life. When the Spaniard Unamuno speaks to us about his "man of flesh and bone" [1] — a man who *cannot* accept his own annihilation nor even admit the desire to "be someone else" — we are distracted from such distractions. We are left feeling like fleshless, boneless ghosts. We suspect that we are bored not by the prospect of an endless life, but by the prospect of compromises and inadequacies in our future as in our past, — and that *therefore* we have thrown in the sponge to the finality of death. His point was this: to give in at the outset either to the limits of natural evidence *or* to the fresh evidence of the demands of the will is to snap the tension in which human life must be lived and in which alone it can be lived fully. It is to destroy

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[1] From *The Tragic Sense of Life* by Miguel de Unamuno, reprinted through permission by Dover Publications, Inc., New York 10, New York. ($1.95)

the possibility of high art and high morality. But most decisively, it is to destroy the possibility of a living faith in God — who is defined as one who brings the living from the dead. Does this not point us to a *way of life* which may include within itself the faith of Easter? Does it not intimate something concerning a *connection* between the resurrection and the life?

But on this day of days, let us turn to him whom the day remembers, to one who has become for many the decisive source in this matter. Hear Jesus Christ say to us: "I am the resurrection and the life!" Jesus is pointing not to a rational proof or speculation nor to a human wish nor even to a sacred doctrine taken simply by itself. He is pointing to himself. He is pointing to his own being and life as that which bears the reality and the power of the resurrection. In our story Jesus does not deny the expectation of Martha, shared by many in her day, concerning a "resurrection at the last day." He simply affirms it: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." But Jesus also names the one *in whom* the resurrection is effective, and who *in fact* triumphs over death: "And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." "Whoever lives and believes in me" — this is the man, to use another of Jesus' phrases, who "will never taste death." This is the one for whom there is no "sting" in death and over whom the grave can claim no victory.

Into the Teeth of Death

Consider the story which provides the occasion for these words. Lazarus has died in Bethany and Jesus has come again to Judea. He has been warned against coming: "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" This was his reply: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." An illuminated way of life, the demands of life itself, required his walking into the teeth of death. He could not turn out of this way without walking into darkness and losing the light of life. This was the way of life, even if it meant death — as not many days later, it did.

All around Jesus were men and women in darkness. Some affirmed the resurrection, others denied it; but all were walking in the night. When the death of Jesus was imminent, some fled from him, while others crucified him. Some hid in the darkness, as though life in the light could not be risked. Others shook their fists in the darkness: "He trusted in God, let God deliver him now!" — screaming in their way that such life, such light is foolish aand deceiving. *He* cried: "It is finished!" He had gone all the way to death in the light of life. A moment later he commended his life to one who gave it: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

The death of Jesus gave his disciples a good clear look at what life is like where death rules — and at what their own lives were like. Such livin may seem plausible and natural, even "rational to one who is caught up in it; but it is also poin less, unpretty and self-condemned. It is *guilt* and therefore death in it seems fearful and fina They might as well have died with Jesus — e cept for that. Then came the Easter event which they testify. With it came the peace an forgiveness of the risen Christ. Now for the fir time it was really clear, and they were free t see it. The world stood confirmed to them a God's creation and man as God's creature. Me of flesh and bone are what he made and what h wants — even in the world. Christ *was* the resu rection and the life; and he was *their* resurrectio and *their* life even now. They *had* died with Chris and had been resurrected to a new life with him Now they walked in the light as he was in the ligh and into the teeth of death as he did. They di not rise up to live as Christ lived merely becaus they believed in a resurrection; now they believe the resurrection as persons who had been raised u to live as Christ lived.

Be and Then See

And now the Spirit brought to their remem brance all that Jesus had said to them. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. . . . Blessed are the pur in heart, for they shall see God." "If anyone ha the will to do God's will, he will find out whethe my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own authority." "When the spirit of truth comes he will guide you in all the truth." In our cau tious way, we are inclined to say: first I must see and then I will be; first I must know and then I will do. Jesus reversed that order: first we are to be and then we will see; first we are to do and then we will know. Someone once said to Pascal, a man who knew singularly the pangs of faith: "I wish I had your creed, then I would live your life." Swift as a razor came the reply: "Live my life, and you will soon have my creed." Here are some more words by our man of flesh and bone, Unamuno: "Desiring God's existence and acting conformably with this desire is the means whereby we create God — that is, whereby God creates himself in us, opens and reveals himself to us." "Goodness," he said, almost paraphrasing Jesus, "is the greatest single source of spiritual clear-sightedness." [2] The more we think about it, the more we will see that in matters of faith and life this is how it has to be.

The trouble with most of us is that we have been living another way for far too long. Like the disciples before the crucifixion, we listen to Jesus' teachings and we pay lip-service to the teacher. But when it comes to "*walking* in the light," to *following* him through suffering and death, we turn and flee or follow only afar off. Then the darkness comes on and guilt grows in the darkness. We no longer see clearly, or we feel that it is too late to change — or both.

[2] Ibid.

But once again the death of Jesus Christ is before us to show us the fear and smallness, the hurtfulness and guilt, the deathliness of our ordinary ways. For we see him taking all this against himself and upon himself to bear it and to end it. And Easter is with us today to say that it is always possible to make a new beginning. For it speaks to us too the peace and forgiveness of the risen Christ.

This, if we have forgotten it, was the meaning of our baptism. There we were viewed as persons for whom Christ died, for whom the power of guilt and death was buried with Christ and who were now alive with him forever. This, if we sometimes forget it, is what the church is all about. Here, by the Word to us in Jesus Christ we are confronted, reclaimed and sustained in the risen life. So if you have never foresworn your baptism — and if you believe that freedom is really better than bondage, that good is really better than evil, that love is really better than hate, even in a world in which they are still crucified — then you are one who belongs *in* the church of Jesus Christ and not out of it.

A Way to Find Out

"Do you believe this?" Jesus asks at the end of his great declaration. She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world." The question before us is really only this: whether Jesus is the Christ or whether there is no Christ; whether he bears the light of life or whether we are left to our own best lights in a world which is ultimately darkness.

There is a way to find out and by the forgiveness of sins we may take that way. "He who wills to do the will of God". . . . "whoever lives and believes in me." At the very least, let us not flatter ourselves with our doubts concerning Christ and the resurrection — since all such doubts are really self-revealing. Let us rather make the confession that we have never really tried his way — that we have not wanted, have not deserved and therefore could not get an answer.

Then one of two things will happen. Either we will make the "desperate sortie," as Kierkegaard describes the response of faith, or we will be silent. If we have been living like children, without passion and without martyrdom in our lives, we will at least not be naughty children, chirping our doubts — or our glib certainties — about the resurrection. But here is Kierkegaard's advice: "Go out first and become an imitator in the strictest sense. Only such a one has the right to talk. Of them not one has doubted." This is only to repeat the ancient cry and promise of the Scriptures — once chanted by the faithful at the close of each *Te Deum*: "No one who puts his trust in thee will ever be confounded!" — no one.

> Thy Word is true, thy ways are just!
> Above the requiem, "Dust to dust,"
> Will rise our hymn of grateful trust:
> Alleluia!

Christians

(Continued from page 8)

life is what according to Peter makes a Christian worthy of his name. The life of faith does not start with doing certain things which others do not do, but rather with evaluating life and this world in a new way.

Perspective and Destiny

There are two features, however, in Peter's message which seem to make it difficult and apparently impossible for modern man to adopt it. I mean the references to the Resurrection and the Final Judgment. Neither of these concepts has any room in the picture of the universe which the positivistic scientists have contrived. How could they, since their model of the world defines the latter as the sum total of the material things plus the physical and chemical forces working upon them. The bold and noisy assertion of the modern scientists that this definition covers the whole of actual and potential reality has intimidated many theologians. Both the psychologism of Schleiermacher and the existentialism of Bultmann and Gogarten apparently offer a solution of the dilemma by confining the life of faith to certain states of mind. However, by doing so these theologians reduce God to an intracosmic cause of human consciousness or to a mere idea.

As a result, the life of faith, inasmuch as it is life in this world, would be based upon a mere hypothesis, namely "as if" this God of consciousness had also something to do with the material world. This inconsistency lays bare the weakness of these views. Yet, with the refutation of the idealistic view the "natural" outlook is not justified, either. Man cannot live a human life without thinking, i.e., without acting on the assumption that human life is determined by objective values. He does so even when in his actual conduct he debases himself under the beasts. This element of transcendence finds no direct explanation in the prevailing conditions of this world, whereas everything is rendered luminous through the resurrection of Jesus. Therein it becomes evident that man's being extends beyond the limits of this material world into the realm of a redemptive activity of God. This fact, in turn, implies an ultimate goal to be reached as distinct from the life we live here on earth. The objectivity of this goal is expressed by the idea of the Final Judgment. In this life we cannot say how close we have come to our destination. We can only hope and pray that by identifying ourselves with the guiding perspective of Jesus we might be led on the right way. God alone is our judge, and he will make manifest what each one's life is worth. Then we shall see how different we actually were from the rest, while many of those, who appeared to us different, actually had been on our side.

Who Is This Jesus?

By James T. Cleland

IT MUST surely be obvious to each one of us worshiping this morning that this is quite consciously a Palm Sunday service. The hymns and anthems, the Scripture lesson and the prayers have commemorated our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. But let us make our remembrance of this entrance into Holy Week even more memorable by exercising our imagination to transport ourselves even to Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, realizing, of course, that no one knows it by that name yet.

It is one of the busy days in the week before the Passover season. Jerusalem is a Jewish Mecca. It is an international city: Pilgrims are there from Rome and Babylon, from Alexandria and Ephesus. It is a cosmopolitan city: Egyptian corn-brokers, Roman bankers, Greek merchants, and Palestinian beggars rub shoulders in the narrow alleys. There walk in its streets Sadducees and Pharisees, rivals and partners in controlling Jewish thought and behavior. Roman soldiers are present in unaccustomed force. Pontius Pilate has moved his headquarters from Caesarea to Jerusalem for the Passover period. Times of religious excitement may be times of political excitement, and the governor is taking no chances. Pilgrims — the devout — are legion. They have come to worship, in the temple, the Lord their God who is one God.

That is the background. What of the foreground? There is a procession. Here is how it is described for us by Matthew:

> And the disciples went . . . And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

That is the background and the foreground of the triumphal entry which the church remembers today. It was perhaps the single happiest day in the life of Jesus — in its opening hours. And, as he entered the Holy City amid the excited and exultant shouts of his followers, it was inevitable that a question should be asked. Here is how Matthew puts it: "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?"

"Who is this?" It may have been asked out of simple curiosity, perhaps a question often put during those pre-Passover days as strangers crowded Jerusalem. "Who is this?" It may have been asked in surprise, maybe with a touch of contempt, as Jerusalemites noted that the mounted stranger was attended by despised Galileans. "Who is this?" It may have been asked in awe, by religious folk who recalled an Old Testament prophecy from Zechariah:

> Tell ye the daughters of Zion
> Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
> meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt,
> the foal of an ass.

"Who is this?" Let us, together, look at three answers to that question as they are remembered in the Gospels — answers given in the days of his flesh, and often since then, and even now. "Who is this Jesus?"

The first answer is found in Mark 6:3. "Is not this the carpenter?" That was the normal answer of the people of his own town, and it is a good or a bad answer depending on the tone of voice in which it was said. Jesus was well-known in Nazareth; he and his brothers and sisters were average folk in an average community. He was a manual laborer, a joiner, a journeyman carpenter; he built houses and tables; he made ox yokes and wooden plows. He came from the people of the land; he belonged there.

Moreover, according to our age expectancy, he was a *young* carpenter. Jesus had done his work and had been crucified when the average man of today is just getting into his stride. The Galilean carpenter was dead around the age of thirty-three. That is hard for us to grasp, because of what Dr. Fosdick calls the "tubercular Christ of stained glass windows." The anemic Jesus of much religious painting has aged him for us. To a boy or

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a girl he is always an old man. In one of his sermons on Jesus, Sylvester Horne of England described him in words such as these — I quote from memory:

> Conceive a strong and strenuous young Jewish workman, alive to all the delights of nature and with the crowning joy of a pure heart and a clear conscience and an invigorating consciousness of God; conceive a massive head and rugged face strongly marked with thought and sympathy, but with the mystic light of moral victory always there; conceive dark, keen flashing eyes that can equally speak inspiration or indignation and you have the figure that wanders through my dreams.

That fact was brought home to me some years ago when I was assistant minister in Dunblane Cathedral in Scotland. The minister of the church brought me the new "cradle roll" and asked me what I thought of the painting, which was that of Jesus surrounded by children. There was something strange about the figure of Jesus, but no matter how much I looked I could not tell what was unique about it, until finally the minister pointed out that Jesus was clean-shaven. His defense was that no Scottish boy ever thought of a man of thirty-three with a beard!

Some people, then, saw in Jesus a young journeyman carpenter, who had taken to itinerant preaching. And we can be glad of that. It is a sound American attitude. Here is a verse from one of our own American hymn writers:

> Jesus, Thou divine companion
> By Thy lowly human birth
> Thou hast come to join the workers,
> Burden-bearers of the earth.
> Thou, the Carpenter of Nazareth,
> Toiling for Thy daily food,
> By Thy patience and Thy courage,
> Thou hast taught us toil is good.[1]

That is the A.F.L.-C.I.O. approach to Jesus!

Perhaps this is where some of us stand in our estimate of Jesus. It is a good place to begin. The carpenter is the figure we should see before we try to interpret him. After all, the disciples knew Jesus of Nazareth long before they called him "Christ" or the "Son of God." As the stars were there and appreciated long before man turned scientifically to astronomy, so Jesus was known — and loved — long before our creedal theology. If that is as far as we have come on the road to understanding Jesus, then let us be honest about it and stand there. "Who is this Jesus?" The first answer is very simply and surely: "Is not this the carpenter?"

A second answer is found in Matthew 21:11 — "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." This is the answer that the pilgrims gave to the people of Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, as they escorted Jesus into the city. It is an advance on the previous estimate, but it does not destroy anything said before. The carpenter is prior to, perhaps even basic for, the prophet.

What is a prophet? He is not primarily one who foretells the future. The word for that was "seer." A prophet by definition is "one who speaks out for God." When Amos was ordered to keep quiet by the high priest of Bethel, he replied, "I cannot. When God is inside of you, he is like a lion and you have to roar." Isaiah heard a voice saying, "Who will go for us?" And he replied, "Here am I, send me." And for a generation he spoke for God. Jeremiah did not want to be a prophet, but every morning for over forty years God called him to speak on His behalf, and unwillingly, yet loyally, Jeremiah obeyed! Here is a modern poem which explicates the prophet for us. It is named, quite simply, "The Prophet":

> When the glory of the Lord comes, it's like a mighty wind,
> You hear it roar and thunder in the forests there behind
> And when the blast is on you and the rocks begin to nod,
> Your soul flaps like a pennon in the holy wind of God.
>
> Then you fly like an eagle, and run like a wolf,
> Hunt the roads till sundown, and brood on the gulf,
> You are dumb as a sepulchre, for no man can afford
> To miss the stinging music of the glory of the Lord.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Yes, it's given to a few men to run before the wind
> And hear it roar and thunder in the forests there behind;
> And when the blast is on them, and the rocks begin to nod
> To feel their souls as thistledown in the holy wind of God.[2]

Jesus is in that succession. He was God's man; he saw life in terms of God. That was true as he talked of flowers and of birds and of the hairs of one's head. Tradition tells us that in the temple at the age of twelve he was interested in his Father's house. And yet, while he was God's man, he was also a man's man. He went to a marriage at Cana of Galilee and straightened things out for a young bride and groom. He was called a glutton and a winebibber, and he never seems to have denied it. He had a sense of humor that must have made his audiences chuckle with mirth as he talked of specks of sawdust in one man's eye, and a beam of timber (like a railroad tie) in the eye of another. And all the time he was trying to show them God, how God works, and how he should be worshiped. He had all kinds of people around him: fishermen, tradesmen like himself, tax gatherers, Roman soldiers, hard-shelled ecclesiastics, widows and fatherless children. And to them all he talked about the things of God. He hated the sham in people who prayed for effect, people who came to church to be seen, people who gave donations to this scheme and that, but in the business world were devouring the livings of helpless folk. And yet he advised attending church and giving donations and praying. But he said, "Do it because of God; that is the ultimate reason." "The prophet of Nazareth" — that was a harder job than a carpenter's.

That is the Jesus that many people offer in

[1] Henry Van Dyke, *Toiling of Felix* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913). Used by permission.

[2] Sherard Vines, "The Prophet," *The Two Worlds — Adventurers All Series No. 6* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd.).

answer to the query "Who is this?" The prophet who met people because he loved people and who challenged them because he judged them in terms of God; who is rightly called "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" and as rightly called "the celestial surgeon" — strong enough to inflict pain, strong enough to watch pain, as Robert Louis Stevenson describes him.

Yes, for others Jesus is the prophet, God's spokesman. When we listen to him, we hear the voice of God. A Jewish student at Amherst College remarked that from now on, Matthew, Mark and Luke would be part of the Old Testament. Jesus was for him, the last of the Jewish prophets. I think, too, of a rabbi who willingly led a congregation in the Lord's Prayer because he claimed it was the greatest prayer of the greatest Jewish prophet. That is where some of us take our stand and that, too, is a good place to stand. "Who is this?" The second answer comes: "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Recognition

The third answer, found in Mark 15:39, was not given until five days after Palm Sunday. It is the reflection of the Roman officer in charge of the crucifixion, as he watched Jesus die: "Truly this man was a son of God!" The Revised Standard Version is truer to the original Greek of the Gospel than the King James Version which states: "Truly this man was *the* Son of God." The soldier is not speaking as a Christian theologian but as a man of his own culture, who understood the prevalent ideas of demigods and Greek "heroes" and incarnation. There is no need for us to read any advanced dogma into his ejaculation. Let it be sufficient that he recognized that this criminal was more than human.

Man has always wanted to know God — He who in the last resort gives meaning to ordinary everyday life, the first and final reason for existence. But how shall we conceive of God? Man's instinct has been to interpret him in terms of the best man knows, that is, in terms of man. This is known as "anthropomorphism." Let me give you an analogy which perhaps will clear the matter for you. If you were a fish, how would you think of God? Since most of us are not fish, we think of God in terms of man, and the man who appeals to Western civilization is Jesus. We say that God is like Jesus.

In the topmost room of the Jesus Tower in the YMCA building in Jerusalem, there is on the back of the door, carved into the wood, an empty picture frame with the words written below: "Whom having not seen, we love." Now, it is true that God cannot be completely grasped by man's mind. Yet each of us in our moments of worship wants a "visible thought," a likeness of God, and into that empty picture frame most of us put Jesus. The Christ idea is a consecration of the instinct to have a visible and tangible symbol of God. That is the truth behind the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. The dogmas of the church seem to be like frozen foods; that is, they are neither palatable nor digestible until the are thawed out, until they are embraced wit warmth and insight and sympathy. The trut behind the Incarnation and the Trinity is tha God is like Jesus: it is as simple as that — in e sence but not in development!

For some of us, Jesus is Son of God, not merel *a* son of God but *the* Son of God. He is the wor "God" became flesh. In him we begin to compre hend the meaning of life: the interplay of love an righteous indignation; the ebb and flow of suffer ing and healing; the promise of victory over death God's character and will and purpose are know to us because of Jesus, in him and through him Who is this Jesus? The third answer is: "Truly this man is the Son of God."

Every generation must answer the question "Who is this Jesus?" Every year at this season i is asked of us who come to worship. What is our answer? "Is not this the carpenter?" Yes, that is a true answer. "This is Jesus, the prophet of Naza reth of Galilee." Yes, that is a true answer. "Truly this man was a — the — Son of God." Yes, that is a true answer. But — how do we, each one of us, answer?

Good Friday Prayer

O FATHER of love and compassion, we pray today for all those who suffer; for the hungry, weary multitudes of the earth; for those who bear the pain of sickness and the anguish of grief. We pray for the unemployed, the homeless, the destitute; for those who are overworked, downtrodden, and in despair. O God of mercy, grant that we may behold today the eternal sufferer on his cross, waiting for us to liberate him by breaking the chains of evil that enslave mankind.

On a storm-swept hill, long ago, Jesus made clear the way of love to men. Forgive us our failure to follow his ideals. On this day the vision of his noble spirit and long-suffering love steals over us, and we desire to begin a new life of comradeship with him who made this holy hour to be remembered through the centuries. Quicken our hearts, that we may heed our brothers' cry in need, and labor valiantly to free them from pain and death.

Help us to hold fast to his way of life regardless of the cost; and if suffering comes to us, may we bear it bravely, knowing that nothing can ever separate us from thy love. When our strength is spent, help us to remember that thy everlasting arms are underneath us and that the Good Shepherd walks beside us, cheering our way. Amen. — *Robert M. Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

His Creed Was Not That of a Skeptic
But of a Man Trapped in His Mortality

Thomas the Doubter

By John R. Bodo

DO YOU really believe in Easter? Oh, I am not talking about the sentiment — about the music and the memories and the mute witness of the lilies. I am talking about the shattering question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and about the Easter answer to the question, "Because I live, you also shall live!" Of course, we believe as long as death seems far away. Death has little reality for us while we are young or in good health or both.

But for a great many of us who might not be unduly concerned at firsthand, death has a terrifying secondhand reality. Right now someone may be approaching the valley of death's shadow — someone whose life means everything to us. Or else death may have struck very recently and very near, robbing us of an accustomed presence and causing a wound which is just beginning to scar.

Yes, it is hard to believe in Easter. The nearer our fear or our loss, the harder it is, and the more inclined we may be to sympathize with Thomas the Doubter.

At first glance, Thomas does not seem to be cutting a very good figure. The synoptic Gospels merely list his name among the Twelve. The Gospel of John is more explicit but hardly flattering. Thomas is first shown at a conference of the apostles in the province of Perea where they have taken refuge after the first threat of hostility from the authorities in Jerusalem. Suddenly a messenger comes to tell Jesus that his friend, Lazarus of Bethany, the brother of Martha and Mary, is dying. Jesus is ready to go at once but the apostles resist him. "Master," they plead, "the people were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" But when they cannot persuade him they yield to his self-confidence. Only Thomas takes the dark view. "Let us also go," he says, "that we may die with him."

The second time Thomas says something for the record is at the Last Supper. Having long accepted the worst, he appears grieved — and peeved — at the Master's attempt to comfort him. Jesus is talking about his Father's house with many rooms where he is going to prepare a place for his friends. Assuming that the apostles understand, he says, "You know where I am going and you know the way." But Thomas interrupts, "Lord, we do not know where you are going: how can we know the way?" The poetry of Jesus seems wasted on Thomas. He wants prose — plain, literal prose.

Thus far Thomas has revealed himself as a forerunner of our contemporary existentialists — looking for the worst, finding it and facing it. But in the Easter scene his desperate courage becomes sheer despair, just one step removed from blasphemy. Having missed the evidence which Jesus had given the others and rejecting it as not only unlikely but impossible, Thomas cries out, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe!" There he is at the bottom of the slough of despond, doubting everything except his own doubts: a man who has died with Jesus but will not rise with him.

Also Called Twin

Can we excuse such conduct by an apostle? Perhaps our first task is not to excuse but to understand. I have a theory — farfetched but not lacking in plausibility. Thomas was called *Didymus,* the Twin. In fact, the name "Thomas" is a transliteration of the Aramaic word for "twin." What happened to the other twin? There is no clue in the Gospels, but suppose Thomas had a twin brother who died in the full flower of youth just before Thomas met Jesus. Suppose that this twin brother had been literally half of Thomas' own life — a friend and companion whose death left Thomas in that tragic state which all of us have to experience sooner or later. He was alive but had no further interest in life. He went about his business but his mind was not on it nor his heart in it. Then, into his emptiness came Jesus of Nazareth.

Imperceptibly, almost in spite of himself,

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Thomas transferred his love to Jesus. The Master whom all his friends came to know as "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" became for Thomas a twin brother — the one whom no one would dare take away from him. It may not be accidental that we have so few recorded words of Thomas. He probably had little to say. He was content to follow Jesus around, worshiping him with all his buried and risen love, ready to defend him against anyone or anything — chiefly against death.

But Thomas was a realist. Having experienced the power of death, he was not able to forget it. He knew that death always wins in the end. He was agonizingly aware of the Master's mortality but quite deaf to the music of his promises. Thus, when the others were ready to take Jesus at his word with the relative unconcern of people who had never clashed with death head-on and been left bleeding and bruised, Thomas showed a more perceptive, more heroic courage. "Let us go," he said, "that we may die with him." He was ready to die with Jesus because he would not live without him. Having half died in the death of his brother, he did not wish to outlive him who had more than taken his brother's place.

But Jesus kept turning the knife in the old wound. He insisted on repeating the promise which Thomas knew no mortal man could fulfill. In fact, it seemed unkind even to make such promises in the hearing of one who so well knew the awful finality of death. "Lord," he burst out at the Last Supper, "we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" But what he meant to say was, "Lord, I know where you are going. Like my brother, you are going to your death, and I want to go with you. So please, do what you must, but stop consoling us when you know that there is no consolation."

One of the Twelve

I am certain that the apostles were provoked with Thomas. They resented his throwing cold water on their confidence in Jesus, or rather on the "all will be well" attitude into which their dependent, immature faith so easily degenerated. They regarded Thomas' question at the Last Supper as uninspired and ill-timed. They were not particularly surprised when Thomas did not join them after the crucifixion. They could not blame him for having deserted Jesus. That they all had done. The fear of death — so abstract and unreal when all is well — comes into its own when there is a real threat to life, marshalling an army of instincts at the service of survival. The apostles had all deserted. Ironically, Judas was the only one who had the courage — and the required self-loathing — to follow Jesus into death. As for Thomas, he might be somewhere contemplating the same tragic course. He had never been a gracious companion to the others. It was not surprising that he did not seek their company now.

Then Jesus appeared to the apostles — only a few hours after his first appearance to Mary Magdalene. Ten were present to witness the impossible. Ten testified to the miracle of Christ's victory over sin and death. Did they go out looking for Thomas to tell him the news, or did they wait until, led by some instinct, by some stubborn hope lodged deep below the level of consciousness, he groped his way back into that upper room to find there a circle of light and a chorus of praise? We do not know. All we know is that with his accustomed honesty, courage and agonizing despair he rejected their witness. His cruel words must have hurt him more than they hurt the others. For them they were only blasphemy. For Thomas they were a creed — the creed not of a skeptic but of a mortal man trapped in his mortality — the creed of a twice-dead man whose only hope was that death would soon try for the third time and bring him at last the end of grief and the release of oblivion. This is all anyone could hope for before that first Easter Day! Thomas was only more forthright in his recognition of the fact of death — more uncompromising with wishful thinking — more proudly wedded to his own integrity in the face of death. The other ten had the easy part now. They had seen the dawn which Thomas had not seen. It behooved them ill to be impatient with him.

An Apostle of Jesus Christ

But Jesus was not impatient. He had not forgotten that Thomas was the only one who wanted to go with him to the side of Lazarus not because he thought that all would be well, but because he knew that nothing would be well. Nor had Jesus rebuffed Thomas for questioning him about his destiny. Instead, he had responded with one of the greatest summaries of the Christian faith: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." No, Jesus never lost patience with Thomas because he valued honest doubt more than he valued blind belief. For belief can be blind. Gullibility, superstition and prejudice are all close kin of belief. The lazy acceptance of outworn theories undeservingly enthroned as dogmas has lent respectability to man's inhumanity to man, retarded the progress of human betterment, and kept the spirit of man in a prolonged, unlovely infancy. But God grants to every generation men and women who will not believe just because it is the thing to do, but who will question and probe and search, not because they lack faith but because they seek a bigger faith in a bigger God.

Thomas would not believe on anyone's say-so — even Christ's — but he was capable of faith. For faith is personal trust with unflinching honesty and with courage to accept not only the best but the worst. Thomas did not really want to test the risen Christ crudely and literally. He wanted to believe in the Resurrection more than anyone, but he wanted Jesus to welcome investigation.

There is hardly anything more foolish and self-defeating than to try to protect Jesus — or the writings in which he is presented to us — from the scrutiny of sincere seekers or even from the irreverent sleuthing of scoffers. Sincere seekers

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It Is Finished

By J. A. Sanders

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:30.

WHAT does it mean, this word *tetelestai?* According to John it accompanies the very expiration of Jesus' last breath. What does it mean? There are so many possibilities.

To be critically honest we should not find too much in the Greek verb *teleo,* meaning "accomplish" or "come to an end." Franz Delitzseh in his translation of the New Testament into Hebrew (1880) uses undoubtedly the *mot juste* when he translates it *kullah — It is finished.* The form critics are probably right in seeing these so-called "last seven words" as later accretions. If we are interested in what really happened we must probably be satisfied with the likelihood of a simple outcry of pain and anguish. What the evangelists are trying to say, as so often elsewhere in the Gospels, is that the crucifixion fits into the divine pattern. The point that had first to be established for the faith and mission of the church was that this crucifixion was not just another that Josephus might chronicle alongside that of the eight hundred Pharisees whom Alexander Jannaeus crucified in 88 B.C. or those crucified in the War of Varus in 4 B.C. This was no accident of history.

In other words, the crucifixion is not at all what it seems to be, a tragedy of life, another case of a good man unjustly accused — a miscarriage of human justice. Far from that, it is the true statement of divine judgment on all mankind. Yet more and at the same time it is the true statement of divine grace. God did not conquer sin and solve man's predicament by fighting evil with evil but by conquering evil with suffering love. Simply put, they wanted simply to say — this is not only a fact of history; this is the true sovereignty of God.

Then what is meant by *tetelestai — It is finished?* From the days of slavery we inherit the spiritual, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" One of the outstanding factors in the cultic rites of Old Testament Israel was the act of remembrance, which we call today *anamenesis.* By this cultic principle Israel saw herself reflected in the stories which made up her cultic, or holy, history. For instance, by this principle later Israel claimed for herself in each generation the experience of the Exodus, or the vicissitudes and victories of Abraham and Jacob. Thus there was the sense of corporate personality whereby the patriarch Jacob was Israel latent or the people Israel were Jacob patent. The pattern of the interpersonal tensions between Jacob and Esau was the pattern of intertribal and international relations between Israel and Edom, or other nations. The blessings of Jacob (Genesis 49) or Moses (Deuteronomy 33) upon the twelve patriarchs became little mirrors wherein the later tribes saw themselves well-reflected. By the same principle, the church finds itself reflected in the gospel story. It is remarkable how the vicissitudes and victories of the twelve disciples are a portrait of the church since that time. Let us look carefully into the mirror which the last moment of Jesus' life affords, to see if perhaps the world has ever really escaped that moment or if in some sense we must not hear for ourselves the anguished cry, "It is finished."

"Were You There?"

Suppose we gather about the cross and observe the reactions of those the passion account tells us heard or might have heard this fearsome cry. We are told in Matthew that at Jesus' final word the curtain of the temple was torn in two and in the Gospel to the Hebrews that a large lintel of the temple fell down. Nature's response to this divine judgment was, as in the prophets, in concert with the curse, a fall of darkness at midday. Nature's response is, therefore, in the early Christian cultus clear and sharp. What was man's response? What meaning did it have, this awesome cry, to those present, those who were there when they crucified my lord?

There were the two thieves, the one desperate for his life whose last hope of clinging to an empty existence was this teacher, this man of whom he

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had heard as the Christ. *Save yourself and us!* Let's see you make good your claims. Like the tempter in the desert at the start of Jesus' career this man at the end of his life challenges Jesus to show his supernatural powers. But all Jesus could respond was *It is finished.* Disappointment and derision were the reaction of the first thief — Yeah, it's over, but good. I knew you couldn't do anything for anybody, anyway. You're a big joke, Jesus. All life's one big joke. And we hear his raucous, derisive, but frightened laughter pierce our own doubting hearts.

There was the second thief, and the centurion. Their reaction was much the same. *We are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong* is the rebuke of the so-called "good thief" to his weak companion. Likewise the centurion, according to Luke, said *certainly this man was innocent.* These two statements represent at least the reaction of most men since that day. Jesus' crucifixion is history's prime example of the miscarriage of justice, the innocent oppressed and unjustly accused. This is humanism at its best: the cross is man's sin, his inability because of his own fears and insecurity, to insure justice's true balance and right execution, that trapped in his own fears and ambitions man yet fails to guarantee his own rights and dignity. *Certainly this man was innocent,* says the centurion, to our shame and to our failure.

Nasty Job

Then there were the Roman soldiers. It was noon, they say, when they crucified him. Assigned to a detail they did their job. *And they crucified him.* A soldier doesn't ask why he drew this or that assignment; he does what he is ordered to do. *And they crucified him.* Nasty job to pull. But somebody has to. When your number's up, your number's up. *And they crucified him.* Wretched day. Hot. Humid. Cloudy. Storm brewing. Anybody for a quick game? *And they cast lots to divide his garments.* Thirsty! Listen to that one. He's thirsty! Who in Hades isn't on a damnable day like this? Here, give him some of that vinegar they throw out on their passover — that'll show him a thirst! If you are the king of the Jews, get out of this one — if you can! Not exactly a kingly brew, a royal potion. *Father, forgive them. It is finished.* A bad job; but it's over now. *It is finished.* Another day, another shekel.

Annas and Caiaphas heard it, and so did their legal advisors. A close call on that one. Seditious rebel. Can't afford to have the Romans on our necks for the likes of him. Jeopardize the whole nation? Not on his life!! King of Israel indeed! But it's over now. Case of the traitor Jesus closed. *It's finished.*

The crowd dwindles. The shouting subsides. Wagging their heads they snort and chuckle. Destroy the temple! Who did he think he was? Rebuild it in three days! He fancied himself at playing Solomon. Good riddance, I say. That was a good one. But, *it's finished* now.

Somewhere in the shadows lurked a freed man. Released from prison, his first day out of jail Barabbas delivered from bondage! Term of sentence finished.

Off in the distance on the palace balcony, stan Pilate and his wife. A nightmare come true, bu after all — I didn't really know him. It wasn't a though he were somebody important. What done's done. *What I have written I have writte* says he. Call the house boy and have him remov this bowl and make sure he cleans the ring aroun the bowl. If there is anything I can't stand, says h it's a dirty wash bowl. The towel too. I like thing neat and trim, nothing half done, you know. An that's that. *It is finished.*

Back in the shadows on the hill a few remain The disciples and the women. The tragic end o a noble adventure. Everything seemed fine las night at supper. I gave up my fishing, my whol life to follow him. And it comes to this. Wha went wrong? What happened? Nothing mean anything anymore. You bet your life on the bes you know and then this. It's all over. All I've believed in, everything I've put my faith in. *It i finished.* Disillusionment. Disappointment. Trag edy. Return to Galilee and return to trying t make a living fishing. That's all there is now. *I is finished.*

Down the hill a way stands a husky fellow, a field laborer looking pensively at the figure on th cross. Simon of Cyrene says to himself, I though it would help a bit to carry the cross. I didn' realize until now the hardest part — to have th cross carry you. Just to hang there. Poor fellow I guess he's glad it *is* finished. *He* had the rough part. Just hanging there. It's good it is all ove now; a body just couldn't take much more. *It' finished.*

All kinds of people look for the Kingdom o God, like Joseph, the one from Arimathea. A pious man if ever there was one. A member of a local small town Sanhedrin. You can't blame him though. He didn't have anything to do with this. He's against capital punishment in the first place and not only that, he couldn't be sure about Jesus — he was looking for the Kingdom of God. But too late now. Right or wrong such people typically find what they are looking for a little too late. Nothing now to say or do for that matter but bury the remains. Well, that we can do in proper style. The best tomb available, the finest shrouds — pile the flowers high. Better late than never. The finish it is.

But in the stillness of eternity did you ever hear a heart break? In the chill of infinity did you ever hear the heart of God break? *I have given the beloved of my soul into the hand of the enemy.*

But *it is finished.* God broke his own heart and it was finished. The love of God pursued us everyone to that hill where the cross stands. What does it mean to us that it is finished? Not with armies celestial or apocalyptic cataclysm, not with swords loud clashing, nor vengeance, not rebuke, nor justice, nor just deserts: the strife is o'er, the battle done! *It is finished.* Love pursued sin and evil, corruption, ignorance, rebellion, and pride all the

way to Calvary and nailed them to the cross. We have done our worst. Man can do no worse than he had already done. *It is finished.* No Enochian Son of Man appearing in the clouds with angelic armies won this battle. No, God just broke his heart. And *it is finished.*

The strife is o'er, the battle done; the victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun; *It is finished!*
The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their legions has dispersed
Let shouts of holy joy outburst; *It is finished!*

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne . . . the voice of many angels, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" Amen.

Thomas

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will always find more than they have come for. Scoffers will often stay to pray. Only the uncritical, anxiously protective and egotistically possessive "believers" stand to lose anything at all. They stand to lose their little dogmas and puny self-respect, while the Lord shows Thomas his wounded hands, and Thomas sinks on his knees whispering, "My Lord and my God!"

Thus Thomas the Doubter became Thomas the Apostle, not in spite of his doubts but thanks to his doubts. Far from rejecting him, Jesus granted him the extraordinary honor of a special appearance. He knew how badly the world needed Thomas. He knew that only a converted skeptic can convert skeptics. The mind of the masses is always for sale to the highest bidder. The mind of a man who insists on being an individual in all the awful loneliness of individuality, is not for sale at all. But this is the man Jesus wants the most: the scholar and scientist who will pursue truth wherever it may lead; the citizen of the world who accepts all his fellow citizens as persons rather than as bearers of convenient labels; the humanist whose curiosity and compassion encompass everything human but who hungers and thirsts for meaning beyond this brittle life so precariously set between a shrill, small cry and a deep gasping sigh.

Have you lost a twin — someone in whose death half of you seems dead? Are you afraid of the "lonesome valley" for someone you love or perhaps for yourself? Are you unable or unwilling to be comforted by springtime, romantic immortality, and the expensive trickery of the undertaker's art and craft? Then take Thomas. Take the doubter who went all the way, and rest your faith in his faith. Take that kneeling figure surrounded by the radiance of the Risen Lord. Say with him, "My Lord and my God!" Then hear with him the tender, final beatitude uttered by our Lord: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Gethsemane

(Continued from page 5)

for it, but fails to recognize it as significant reality in our human destiny. Generally it is assumed that suffering is essentially negative, and no good comes from it. The New Testament was bolder. Though it may have been the work of the devil, yet the Christian accepted it as the avenue of fulfillment not otherwise open to man. They did not expect to share in Christ's glory without passing through the same Via Dolorosa.

Suffering is a mystery. It does not lend itself to formula of explanation. As a problem there is no "solution." As Stavrogin knew, to look at the cross may shatter a man's faith as easily as it may save his soul. Faith is not the leap which draws back from it, but the strength which bears it. It takes its stand at the very point at which God is most seriously questioned and makes its affirmation where doubt is the deepest. The miracle at the heart of such a mystery is precisely that when one penetrates the darkness and stands in the very Garden of Gethsemane, the darkness itself does not master the light. The supreme dignity of man is revealed when he does not run from this mortal anguish but grasps it firmly as one who knows beyond himself, "If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done."

Music as Worship

MUSIC is an integral part of worship. It lifts the soul to God; it invigorates the mind; it restores the faith. It unites beauty and religion giving expression to all that is sublime and lovely. Great music is never man-made only but is always inspired by God. Man is the vehicle of the inspiration and gives it expression whether as composer or interpreter. The spoken word often falls upon the ear as dully as a stone falls upon the sodden earth. But the word that is sung lifts and inspires as it expresses the religious feelings and experiences of the ages. A singing church bears witness to the inexhaustible riches of Christ which are alive within those who rejoice in their faith. — *Chester E. Hodgson, Kings Highway Methodist Church, Brooklyn, New York.*

Surprised by Life

By Taylor E. Roth

TWO hundred miles northeast of Los Angeles lies a gorge named Death Valley. An awesome place, it is the lowest spot in continental United States — 276 feet below sea level. It is also the hottest. The official maximum reading is 134 degrees Fahrenheit. Unofficial, unshaded readings run much higher. Rivers flow into it and disappear. A scant two and one half inches of rain fall annually.

Not long ago an amazing thing happened. For nineteen straight days rain fell into this sterile wasteland. Suddenly all kinds of seeds, dormant for years, burst into bloom. In a valley of death, people were surprised by life.

In a way that is the story of Passion Week and Easter. The crucifixion is the Death Valley of the Bible. It is the lowest spot on its continent. But on Easter the showers of God's grace and the powers of his love fell. And suddenly all manner of new life burst forth from this dead gorge of history!

Each Gospel tells the same story. People expecting death were surprised by life. Mark tells how three women went to the tomb on Easter morning to anoint a dead body. They were surprised by life! John tells how Mary Magdalene wept uncontrollably at the mouth of the empty grave until she heard a voice speaking her name. It took her breath away! She was surprised by life. Two disciples were traveling to Emmaus. As they walked they unburdened hearts of sorrow and loss to a stranger. Evening came on. They went into a lodging. When the stranger broke bread, their eyes were opened. And they rushed back breathless to Jerusalem to tell how, with eyes for death, they had been surprised by life! John tells how a frightened huddle of Christians were visited by the Risen One and "they disbelieved for joy." Here was a Life, literally thrust on quaking and uncomprehending people. Unbelievably, God's grace and power fell into the Death Valley of their experience. To their amazement, all manner of new life sprang into bloom.

It makes you think. It makes you think, in th first place, that we cannot judge all of life b the immediate circumstances. We often do, c course. The disciples did. In the shrouded dar ness of Good Friday, they judged all of life to b dark and hopeless.

Three blind men examined an elephant. Th first touched a leg and said, "It's a tree." Th second touched an ear and said, "It's a leaf." Th third touched the tail and said, "It's a rope." All were wrong. All were judging the whol elephant by a part of it. It is a frequent mistak We do it with life. We judge a year by a day an a day by an hour. In a tough situation, devoid o pleasantness and opportunity, we conclude that al of life is futile and always will be. So did th disciples.

Parents have a child who is never well in in fancy. They do their best. They lose heart. "Thi child will never be strong," they think. The judge his whole life by his infancy. Students in the second year of college bog down in "th sophomore slump." For five cents they would throw the books in the basket. They are sick o classes. "The search for truth," they think, "is a foolish myth." They quit. They judge four year of college by a bad year.

A musical genius goes deaf. He thinks, "My career is finished." A vicar in London sees hi church bombed during the war. An incendiary lodges in a corner of the roof beyond the reach o ladders. At midnight the fires blaze hottest. A seventy-two, he watches and thinks, "I know the end has come for me." The disciples follow thei Lord until he approaches the needle's eye of death As soldiers jostle him off, they run. They think "All is lost, the hopes are dashed, the joy is gone the dreams exploded, the life is done." They judge all by the moment.

But wait a minute! These same discouraging conditions which seem devoid of opportunity may teach the best lessons we ever learn and bear blessings locked in their hearts. The child that seems never to be strong may grow up to be a rough-riding Theodore Roosevelt. The student who is disgusted with study may suddenly be lifted by a renewing vision of truth. The deaf musical genius may go on to write "The Ninth Symphony."

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The vicar in London may see his church come back and rise again to new glory. And the cold and pallid darkness of Good Friday may turn into the most brilliant sunrise this old world has ever seen!

That is what Easter says: "Don't be too sure; don't judge too quickly; don't think you can always judge all of life by the immediate bad circumstances. Don't think you can judge the next decade by the last year or the next week by the last ten minutes. When you least expect it, you too may be surprised by life!"

Unlikely Places

It makes you think, in the second place, that we never know where new life will emerge. Judging from the Easter story, it can come when you are on your way to anoint a dead body. It can come, as to Peter, when you have counted all lost and are going back home to forget your wild hopes and expectations. It can break forth as you stand with the broken pieces of your dreams in your hands. It can rise like a tide as you sit engrossed with sorrow. You never know!

John Keats, at twenty, was pursuing medical studies in London. He was good at them but they were not satisfying. In the spring of the following year, Charles Clarke, a friend, introduced him to Leigh Hunt. In Hunt's presence new life broke forth. A few months later Clarke introduced him to Chapman's translation of Homer. As Keats read it, it was sheer magic! He tells us: "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken." Forgetting medicine, Keats found life breaking forth from poetry and a book.

Dr. Benjamin Minge Duggar is the discoverer of a modern wonder drug. Everywhere he goes he scoops up a handful of soil and sends it back to a laboratory in New York. Small boys, farmers and sometimes national park policemen shake their puzzled heads at him. But Dr. Duggar remembers that it was just such a handful of dirt taken from a Missouri farm that had hidden within it the golden mold which produced aureomycin! "You never know," he says, "where a better drug will be found." And Easter reminds us that we never know where new life will break forth!

Thomas Wolfe, one of our great American writers, grew up in Ashville, North Carolina. His roots were deep there, although he was not always welcomed. In 1937, shortly before he died, he made a trip home. He met a fellow writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald, staying in a local resort. Fitzgerald did not think much of Ashville. He asked Wolfe, "What are you doing in these God-forsaken hills?" To which Wolfe protested passionately, "Don't you believe it, Scott! Why, I've just spent the morning out there in the mountains talking with a great-uncle of mine, and there's more material out there than in all your fashionable hotels. That's where life is, Scott!" [1]

Easter reminds us that sometimes new life is found in a dusty book, in a handful of dirt, in God-forsaken hills, in a desolate tomb, in Death Valley! It says to us, "You never know from what strange quarters and in what strange garb new life will emerge. You, too may be surprised by life."

Eyes to See

It makes you think, in the third place, that we had better be alert so that we see new life when it appears. It is possible to miss it, you know. Mary looked at Jesus but did not recognize him — at first. The men on the way to Emmaus looked right at Jesus but did not recognize him — at first. All around us there may be wonders and marvels — if only we have eyes to see.

An American publicity man was walking past a French beggar near the Madeleine in Paris on one of the first good days of spring. The horse-chestnut trees were in bloom, the trees were showing their tenderest green and the sky was a bland blue. The beggar carried a sign: "Blind from birth." No one noticed. Not a coin tinkled in his cup. The American paused, thought, and then dictated a new sign. It read: "You can see the spring. I cannot." Spectators applauded and flooded the cup with money.

Was the sign accurate? I wonder. I wonder how many saw the new life and beauty of spring that day — really saw it. Having eyes was no guarantee that the disciples could see new life when it came to them on Easter. With new life burgeoning all about us, as close as a companion on the Emmaus Road, we can miss it. We can gaze full-view at a world visible, tangible, knowable and apprehensible; yet fail to view, touch, know or clutch it — really!

We may be preoccupied. Mack, the Negro servant of the late Senator Robert A. Taft, said, "Never saw a man like Senator. You take something like breakfast. He come down in the morning. He sit down at the table and he takes out his little book and writes in it — every morning he writes in it. I say 'Good morning, Senator.' No answer. I go out of the room and bring in the coffee. I go out again and bring in the cereal. He still writing in that book. Finally, he looks up and says, 'Why, good morning, Mack,' like he is surprised to see me. He hadn't heard me at all." [2] Preoccupied, we may miss more than breakfast. We may miss life!

Or, we may just fail to take the trouble to look. Dr. Clovis Chappell once preached about the shepherd of Christmas who saw but did not follow the star. Decades later, he held a grandson on his knee. He told the stirring story of that night. When he finished the boy said, "Is that all? What did you do when you heard the good news? Was it true? Was the Christ child really born?" And the old man shook a pathetic, snowy white head and answered, "I never knew. Some say it was true; some say it was all a myth. I did

(Continued on page 24)

[1] Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, "Thomas Wolfe Comes Home," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 15, 1957.

[2] William S. White, *The Taft Story* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954). Used by permission.

It Is One Thing to Say That God Is And Quite Another to Seek to Know Him

More Than a Philosophy of Life

By Frederick M. Meek

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. II Corinthians 4:6.

WHENEVER we say that we have a philosophy of life it implies that in some measure we have been thinking about life, what it is, how it is ordered and where we fit into the picture. An adequate philosophy of life is of genuine importance. It can produce high and noble living. We all know those whose philosophies of life center in devotion to whatsoever things are pure, true, honest, just, of good report. And thus guided, they live courageous, useful, creative lives.

A philosophy of life can also be dull, depressing, dangerous, when it depends upon judgments and purposes that have neither deep insight nor far hope, and that show little concern with the meaning of the basic experiences in living. How often have we heard someone say, "Well, my philosophy of life is . . ." and then comes the judgment about life and its conduct. "My philosophy of life is . . . that you get what you deserve." (Well, God have mercy on all of us if that be true.) "My philosophy of life is . . . that you can't change human nature." (And living shrinks into the dimension of life imprisoned in a cell that is measured by human nature's present failures.) "My philosophy of life is . . . that when you're dead, you're dead." (And life's inevitable destiny for each of us is interpreted and accepted as our final obliterating defeat.)

In general, a philosophy of life is rooted in our human wisdom and our own judgment, and depends for its fulfillment upon our own strength, effort and courage. And the question with which we are concerned is, "Is this enough? Is there anything more?"

The philosophy of life pattern has shaped Christian thought and experience for many peopl in our time so that often we have tended to lim Christianity to what we so often describe as " common sense" point of view. Christianity ha an uncommon amount of common sense about i But Christianity would take us far, far beyon the limitations of what we call "common sense." If the God of the Christian faith, who is the cre tive God of life, is to be understood and is gath ered up by the limits of our common sense, the life is hardly worth the living. For the perplexitie into which our human lives fall ask more tha "common sense" for their solution.

Common Sense

A philosophy of life type of Christianity woul say that the Christian faith is largely fulfilled i the Golden Rule and in the simple teachings o Jesus. Jesus taught the Golden Rule. But i Christianity be summed up by the Golden Rul how do we understand the 25 per cent of th Gospel story that deals with the last days of Jesus' life? The Golden Rule falls flat on its face when i begins to climb Calvary's hill on which Jesu was executed.

A philosophy of life type of Christianity turn the Christian faith into a system of moral teachin and high ideals. Christianity *has* high ideals an profound moral teaching. Actually no other wa of life has ideals and teachings so high. But w know from painful experience that there are time when it is beyond our power to fulfill the ideal and the teachings by ourselves. There are othe times when, knowing the ideals and the teachings we deliberately choose the wrong.

A philosophy of life type of Christianity see Jesus as a great teacher, a great humanitarian, moving example. Then the church, the fellowship of Christians, easily becomes what has been calle "a Jesus imitation society." Jesus *is* an exampl for any man who is serious about life, and we *d* try to pattern our lives after his. But if we expec thus to become miniature Jesuses ourselves, w beyond all men are foolishly mistaken.

A philosophy of life type of Christianity is fa more optimistic about man and his goodness, abou the complete effectiveness of culture and civiliza tion and education in overcoming evil, than th

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facts actually warrant. Here we are less realistic about both the evil and the good in human nature than our ancestors were. Our early American forefathers knew that man by himself could not be completely trusted or depended upon. Canon Wedel has put it, "The philosophy of 'checks and balances' which undergirds the American Constitution, and which still preserves our liberty, traces its origin . . . not [to] trust in natural man, but [to] distrust."* And he points out that Thomas Jefferson was realistically Christian in his doctrine of man; for Jefferson said, "In questions of power let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution. . . . Free government is founded in jealousy, not in confidence."

Many sensitive men are agreed today that we are morally inadequate. We fail to create an adequate life for ourselves, and we fail to hold our world together. Our human wisdom by itself has proved to be insufficient. Guided only by a philosophy of life, man is on his own while he is seeking to follow the ideal that he sets or that lures him on. This is satisfactory when life is going well without major opposition or failure, or without that elemental struggle against the evil. But see the plight of the person who is caught up in wrongdoing in spite of his best purpose so that he is defeated; see the man who has become so caught in a pattern of disintegrating habit that he cannot quit the wrong!

When a man is caught in failure and defeated by evil's opposition, ideals can become a mockery. To urge a man to follow Christian teaching or ideals when he is at the end of his resources, can be like having an athlete go into a hospital room and, by way of example flex his muscles, and then call on the patient to stop being "a sissy" and get out of bed, play thirty-six holes of golf, go mountain climbing or skiing. Actually, the hospitalized man needs power which at the moment he does not have within himself.

God Reaches Out to Us

A high philosophy of life may work out its reasons for accepting the existence of a Creator and the evidence of God's mind at work. But the existence of mind and power does not meet religion's claim for either God or for us, nor does it fulfill Christianity's experience. It is not enough to see mind and power in creation. There come times when each of us reaches out for something more than mind or power — even Infinite power or Infinite mind. We reach out to find if there is behind life the Great Person who actually cares, who stands beside, who forgives, the Great Person who reaches out toward us and seeks us, even when we ignore or defy him.

We can say, "I believe that God Almighty is." But Christianity at its best does not begin when we say, "I believe that God Almighty is." It begins to begin when we reach out toward this God Almighty in whom we say we believe. There is a tremendous difference between saying that God is and seeking to know him at first hand in our own personal experience.

The Christian religion goes further, for it says that the God in whom we may thus believe *believes in us* and is reaching out toward us in the midst of our search for him. This two-way relation between him and us moves living forever out of the limitations of the philosophy-of-life existence into the strengths and powers and the different life of this experience of God which the life of Jesus makes known.

See it in fact as it comes alive in men's lives. A well-known writer once told about a bitter unbeliever who disowned his daughter because she married a Christian believer. Near the end of his days he sent for his son-in-law, apparently to try to justify his position and his actions. Always he brought the discussion to a close by saying, "Don't delude yourself, I'm not repentant, I still don't believe in God." Finally the daughter, standing by, said, "Yes, Father, but God believes in you." And that word broke the old man's lifelong bitter resistance toward acknowledging the fact of God as he is known within religious experience.

There came a time when Robert W. Dale, that magnificent figure of English Congregationalism in Birmingham, was very ill. He needed courage and sustaining power. He followed the gospel facts as they are set down in the New Testament. In the book of Hebrews he read, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He thought of Christ tempted even as we are; but that gave him no comfort. "Then I remembered," he writes, "that Christ is my Lord, and it steadied me at once. . . . It was not sympathy that I needed, so much as consciousness of being in the strong hand of One who is my Lord and the Lord of all."

One of the fine Christian leaders in the earlier days of this century was David Cairns, the Scot. He tells of the difficulties that as a younger man he faced in coming to Christian belief. One day he found a little book which opened his eyes to one simple fact which in spite of all the good teaching that he had had, had really never come home to him. The fact was that "just as I was, and whether I loved him or believed in him or not, God cared for me. It seemed extraordinary that I should have needed enlightenment on that final truth of religion."

Jesus Was Unique

Here the Christian faith breaks through the fences of thought and experience set by a philosophy of life which confines human life to human life, even at its best. See it in terms of Jesus. The Christian faith is that Jesus was unique, not just a good man, a great humanitarian or an outstanding moral teacher. In Jesus the great God of the universe showed himself more clearly than anywhere else. This means that we and people like us must matter enormously to God,

* Theodore O. Wedel, *Christianity of Main Street* (New York: Macmillan, 1950). Used by permission.

or he would not have been at such pains to show himself to us.

There came a day when the differences between the way of God that Jesus showed to men, and the way of men who refused to accept God's way as their way, led to opposition intent to destroy Jesus, God's revealer. Man's selfishness and self-centeredness laid violent hands on God's good and sought to obliterate it. The best life that was ever lived was being cruelly killed. In the midst of his pain and suffering he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This asking for forgiveness for those who had so treated him, while difficult, was the easier thing for Jesus to do. There also came the frightening thought: Suppose that all he had been saying and doing was nonsense, was not true. In the ebb and flow of pain and despair and uncertainty he thought that he was forsaken and he called out, as you and I have often called out in lesser circumstances, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" Then the strength and the certainty of other days came once more to reassert themselves and he said to the Great Person, "I have tried to show them what you are like, and it has come to this seeming failure. But I still leave myself in your keeping."

Stoic or Christian?

Was he right or was he wrong? The question is crucial, for here either we move into a high stoic philosophy of life, or we move on into our own experience of the fulfillment of the Christian faith. The New Testament centers around the certainty that Jesus was not wrong, that Jesus was right, that Jesus was not let down. He was sustained. He went through life's worst, and God, standing beside him, went through it with him. He became our guarantee that we are not alone.

I always remember that day in winter when as a young lad I was brought home after I had narrowly escaped drowning. I had been told (wisely) that I was not to skate on the little lake that particular day. But I slipped out with skates and hockey stick. Later, some of us were chasing a puck when I went through an air hole. I went down under the ice. Seemingly the only reason I am here today is because my stick did not follow me. It jammed across the opening. I hung on with one hand and they were able to drag me out from under the ice. I was brought home, half frozen, ice forming on my wet clothes. When I came in the front door, my mother who instantly realized what had happened took one quick look and knowing full well that I had broken a promise, put her arms tightly around a lad who might so easily have been brought home in a pine box. She never said anything, she did not need to. I knew that the result of disobedience had hurt her and frightened her, but there came an assurance that she did and always would care for me — no matter what happened.

It was not any philosophy of life that led her to treat me in that way; it was the strength of her affection undergirding our personal relationship. And Christianity is the fact of such a personal relationship between God and us, on h part.

When we face the fact of how hard at times w have to fight to do the decent thing or the kin thing, when we face finally the difficulty and th hazards of existence and of today's evil, and th facts of life's mystery, we reach out toward An other. We sense that we have to have the com panionship of Another. And the Christian fait would bring us to the place where we know bot God and his companionship. Then, amid presen dangers and perplexities, we live in confidenc that nothing can take us out of his hand. And w are there (in his hand) by inalienable right — because of his affection and power, his trust an forgiveness. This is our Christian faith and ex perience, *beyond any philosophy of life,* and mad known to us in Jesus Christ.

Surprised by Life

(Continued from page 21)

not take the trouble to go and see." Easter is reminder. It is a red string around the finger It says to us, "You never know when new life wil break forth. You had better be alert to see it when it appears."

The application is personal. Is there an indi vidual here looking, hoping for new life? Listen The life you seek is in the Risen Lord. That Life is in the world today. It is available.

In a play, *The Trial of Jesus,*[3] John Masefield conveyed a sense of the strange power the silent Jesus held over his captives. Most impressed with his inward authority was Pilate's wife, Procula.

When she could not save his life, she inquired of his death. Did he suffer much? Were his relatives present? Did his family need help? But one question was a burning one: "What do you think of his claim?"

Longinus, a Roman soldier who was at Calvary, replied, "If a man believes anything to the point of dying on the cross for it, he will find others to believe it."

But, asked Procula, "Do you believe it? . . . Do you think he is dead?"

"No, lady, I don't."

"Then where is he?"

"Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth."

That is the faith of Easter! This same Jesus who came to the first disciples and surprised them by life has power today. His spirit, let loose in the world, cannot be stopped by armies nor missiles nor hydrogen bombs. His spirit, let loose in the world, can reach out to our life-starved spirits, bogged down in futility, strapped in servility. His spirit, let loose in the world, can claim us. And we too, twenty centuries later, can still be surprised by life!

[3] John Masefield, *The Trial of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1925). Used by permission.

God Empowers Us As Wisdom Cannot

The God Who Made John Dewey and the God Whom John Dewey Made

By Harland Hogue

A UNIVERSITY newspaper indicates some urgent concerns of the campus: "Soviet Agression in the Middle East" was discussed last Thursday by a panel of students. And the Christian asks: "What is the relationship between our faith and the most responsible kind of world order we have yet achieved, the United Nations?" Or again, the newspaper reports the Drama Guild selling tickets for: "Waiting for Godot," "Country Wife" and "Androcles and the Lion." And the Christian asks: "What has our faith to say to the basic anxieties being raised by our sensitive playwrights?" Or again, the incoming classes go to the polls to select class chairmen. Once again the Christian asks: "What has our faith to say to the democratic process?"

These are valid questions. And they are related to the fundamental questions raised by a Student Body president: "What is the relation between Christianity and pragmatism? Where are they similar? Where do they differ?" These are important questions.

In the year that Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* was first published (1859), John Dewey was born. A New Englander who never ceased to exemplify the New England virtues, Dewey possessed integrity, simplicity and a love of nature. His Mid-western teaching experience at the University of Michigan and at the University of Chicago broadened his national perspective. He returned to the East at Columbia University where he influenced philosophy, education and in some respects religion as did no other man of his time, unless it be William James.

Dewey strongly emphasized the fact that all religions are conditioned by their environment. Thus a belief in Mana is a product of Melanesian culture. The gods of the Greek and Roman pantheon came out of Greek and Roman culture. Dualism in Christianity was the result of a prescientific culture which had to conceptualize the problem of evil.

This environmental influence, said Dewey, is quite understandable. But what makes these religions inadequate for contemporary man is that the thought forms conditioned by this environment have become static and fixed. Bultmann would have agreed with him. Dewey had an especially strong distaste for creeds. They represented something changeless and therefore irrelevant to the rapidly changing social problems of people.

Moreover, said Dewey, the source of these cultural anachronisms was a curious loyalty in all religions to the supernatural. To trust a power beyond one's self meant the violation of one's disciplined intelligence. This other-worldliness deprived man of social responsibility in democracy, for example. What Dewey objected to here was his assumption that the supernatural was always outside of man. He believed that the center of moral authority should be inside of man. Dewey was willing to use the word "God." But he was no theist in a Christian sense: "It is this active relation between ideal and actual," he said, "to which I would give the name 'God'."

Evil and Education

To be sure there is evil in the world. And no man was a more uncompromising foe of social injustice than this New England philosopher. Some of us remember his vigor in the Sacco-Venzetti case; or in numerous conflicts over academic freedom. But for Dewey evil was a sign of ignorance. He admitted that not all ideals were good. He objected to Matthew Arnold's "power not ourselves" because it worked so exclusively for "righteousness," and left out "beauty, truth and friendship." He believed that "the powers work to enforce other values and ideals than righteousness." What he said here was very important. For he saw nature rewarding good ideals and punishing their enemies. Just how this happened he did not make explicit. Yet he was both realistic and optimistic that the methods of science, intelligence and democracy applied in education would overcome evil.

Thus Dewey's pragmatism brought him to the conviction that education of the kind he attempted to foster was the one hope for the overcoming of evil and for the bringing of good social values to men. Intelligence was the instrument of human betterment. The reason men turned to gods or to a supernatural God was because of fear. Now with the "increase of mechanisms of control, the element of fear has relatively subsided." Or again he wrote: "There is such a thing as faith in intelligence becoming religious in quality."

Here, then, is a profoundly concerned, socially dedicated man, affirming his pragmatism: (1) his plea for the freeing of the religious from the fixity of creeds brought by environmental influence; (2) his nontheistic Absolute "as the meeting point between the actual and the ideal"; (3) his belief that nature will reward the good and punish bad ideals; and (4) finally that faith in intelligence, used in a democratic education, is the instrument in society by which evil is overcome and virtue achieved.

The Gospel

Let us examine from the viewpoint of the Christian gospel these four aspects of Dewey's thought. Dewey abhorred all creeds for they symbolized permanence, fixity, inflexibility brought on by environmental factors. The Christian community would, in part, agree. But only in part. For Mr. Dewey was not interested in history. He was quite precise about his belief that history was irrelevant in the search for values. Yet, if Mr. Dewey had been interested in history in general and biblical history in particular, he would have known that this was precisely the problem of biblical faith: the tension between the priestly and the prophetic. Always the institutional Jewish community, like the Christian community, tended to sanctify itself. Always the prophet pressed through to a knowledge of the one

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true God who stood above history and above the community: "You only have I known of all the nations of mankind," Amos reported God saying to Israel, "therefore, I will chastize you."

Furthermore, if Mr. Dewey had been interested in history he would have discovered that this was what the Protestant Reformation was all about. Only the knowledge of God was adequate for Luther and for Calvin. No man-made creed, no man-made ecclesiastical system, no man-made decision of a Council, no Pope, no Bishop could tyrannize the free spirit of man in confronting Almighty God. *Only God was worthy of a man's complete devotion.*

Mr. Dewey's God was "the meeti point between the actual and t ideal." But this was an imperson social ideal. And the reason Dewe God is an impersonal social ideal because the only problems for Dew were those which could be solved social adjustment. But man is c pendent upon nature much more pr foundly than Dewey would admi Man's dependence is absolute, for ma dies. But even more important, ma knows that he is going to die. It is the heart of the Christian faith th while man is in nature, man is mo than nature. Man is also spirit. A what is spirit is eternal and can touched by neither time nor circu stance. Dewey's naturalism, therefo does justice neither to the profundi of man's dimension, which decre death, nor to his spiritual dimensio which transcends it.

Christian faith affirms the fa that God is person. And that becau God created man, man too is perso It further affirms that only in th knowledge of God as person does man understand his own true natu as a spiritual person. And God affirm that while he is beyond man (tra scendent), he is also within man (in manent). The Psalmist could writ "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit or Paul could affirm: "I live, yet n I, but Christ liveth in me." This i wardness of God, so clearly at th center of the Christian faith, eithe Dewey did not understand or at lea could not accept.

Man and Community

We have already seen that Mr. Dew ey could find no adequate explanatio for evil. He confidently believed tha nature was essentially good. Sinc man was a part of nature, man wa therefore essentially good. Dewey di well to attack the excessive dualism which has sometimes been a caricatur of prophetic faith. Dewey did well t attack other-worldliness which ha made Christianity at times into a re ligion of escape. But here Dewey ha a deficient view of man and therefor a deficient view of community. Be cause he was so sanguine about man he tended to be highly optimisti about democracy. But the commo life does not itself produce values. I serves values already given. Democ racy is not an end in itself. Democrac may — if wisely used — make possibl ends that transcend it either as political or as a social community Reinhold Niebuhr has a much mor realistic view of man and therefore o community: "Man's capacity for jus tice makes democracy possible; bu man's inclination to injustice make democracy necessary."

For the Christian, God as Judge and as Redeemer stands above the com munity. Only as men and women know God and express that knowledge in love of one another is the Kingdom of God even approximated. And even then man does not cease being a sin ner, in the sense that self-love is never completely overcome in history.

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Finally, we have seen that Dewey laced his highest faith in intelligence, sing education as the instrument by which evil is overcome and virtue chieved. Protestantism has always ranted a high place to reason. The Reformation itself came about in part because of the disciplined, inquiring, xperimental mind and experience, in ebellion against the fixed system which restricted spiritual freedom. The early Puritan leaders were scholrs. It was Cambridge graduates which ed the revolt in England and brought ree minds and free souls to these hores. John Cotton, Roger Williams nd their intellectual successors like Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards were first-rate minds. Who founded Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Princeton? Calvinists who believed that learning nd piety were inseparable!

But along with belief in reason, our Christian heritage in general and Protestantism in particular has always been shrewd enough to see that there are heights and depths to life which transcend reason. The New Testament did not make "knowledge" the supreme Christian virtue, but rather "love." Wisdom has always tempted to overreach itself. For wisdom is a form of power. And all forms of power tempt men to pride and arrogance.

The Heart of the Matter

Despite his limitations John Dewey was in some respects a secularized Protestant. He was a naturalist saint. His contribution to our religious integrity was vast. Although he would have denied it and probably was unconscious of it, his own thinking was indebted to Protestant thought at many points. Yet Dewey could never acknowledge this. He thought of himself in relation to Christianity as a prodigal son. And the far country was so pragmatically alluring, he had no desire to return to the father. Finally, rationally and experimentally, he developed the notion that the father did not exist anyway!

This was precisely the heart of the Christian faith which Dewey missed. And which, alas, we too may miss. For, at their centers pragmatism and Christianity are in radical opposition. Pragmatism believes that wisdom can solve all problems. The gospel believes that wisdom apart from God may be demonic and let loose a Third World War and destroy us. Pragmatism believes that man is the measure of all things. The gospel affirms that only God is the measure of all things, and that man, even at his best, is a very fallible person. Pragmatism believes that social values, integrity, beauty, social justice, are in themselves absolute. The gospel affirms that only God is absolute. And that these values are but haunting reminders of what man can be unless God in judgment and in love empowers him.

So, we return, as we began, to the University newspaper which mirrors our world. We do face a serious crisis in the Near East. We do face the personal anxieties depicted by our modern playwrights. We do face the problems of a democratic society. With what do we go from this place of prayer, thought and worship? We go with such wisdom as we have. And we are grateful for it, and will seek for more. But we go empowered by the same God who enabled Jesus to face the cross. God has empowered others. He will empower us. He will give this power now to anyone who in faith will say: "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

* * * * * * *

(I am indebted to the following friends who have greatly informed my thinking on this theme: Dr. Robert H. Bonthius, Chaplain, Vassar College; Dr. Robert E. Fitch, Dean, Pacific School of Religion; Dr. Edward A. White, Professor of History, Scripps College; and Dr. Hugh Vernon White, Professor of Systematic Theology, Pacific School of Religion. H. E. H.)

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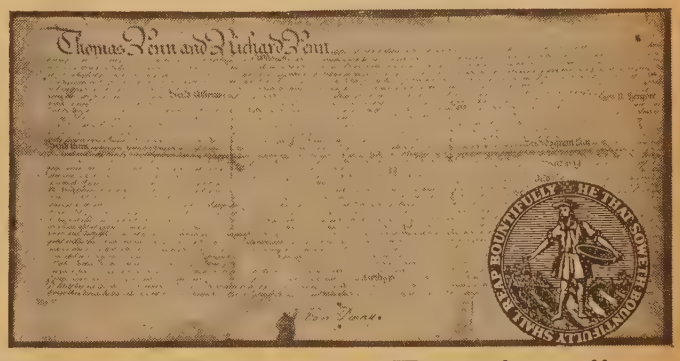

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Book Reviews

PRAYER THAT PREVAILS. *By G. Ray Jordan. Macmillan. $3.00.*

IN this slender volume Dr. Jordan makes a penetrating approach to prayer from the viewpoint that all of life is a prayer. Every act, every word, every thought is a prayer of some kind, he writes, and if these prayers are in accord with and united to the spirit of Jesus, then, and only then, they will prevail in our lives.

This sixteenth book by Dr. Jordan represents the highest thoughts and the most mature insights of one of America's best known and most brilliant Christian ministers. Dr. Jordan is professor of homiletics and chapel preacher of the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. *Prayer That Prevails* is a distinctive contribution to the Christian literature on prayer. It is not simply another book on prayer. Rather, it is a fresh, vital and exciting new approach to the questions: why we pray, for what we pray, how we pray, when we pray, and to whom we pray. Every page of the book radiates with the faith of a sincere Christian who has experienced the power of prayer. The author writes with the confidence of one who knows the secret of answered prayer.

Not only does Dr. Jordan write intelligently and helpfully on this subject most vitally related to the life of the Christian, but he also vividly depicts his ideas. Loaded with invaluable and inspiring illustrations, *Prayer That Prevails* will be read widely by both ministers and laymen. — *Gordon Thompson, First Methodist Church, Marietta, Georgia.*

DESIGN FOR PREACHING. *By H. Grady Davis. Muhlenberg. $4.75.*

THE field of homiletics soars beyond its traditional stereotype in this unusual book, and we come to see a good sermon as something that *grows* rather than as something pounded together. The author even avoids the standard terminology, such as structure and outline (he speaks of "design" and "sketch") in his effort to demonstrate that a good sermon is the result of the growth-process of a single idea. The idea becomes the substance of a larger form, known as the sermon, and the sermon's strength depends far more on a great idea clearly stated than on a trite notion cleverly constructed. "Thought and its expression, content and organization, substance and form, are not two things — but one, two inseparable aspects of the same thing."

The author almost goes out of his way to avoid repeating the old formulas and classifications, so familiar to books on homiletics. This is a stric new approach to homiletics, at least far as books are concerned. Wi painstaking persistence, he illustra from current and classic sermons, lit ature and speeches. He is at hor with T. S. Eliot as well as Shakespea and is actively aware of the intellectu and cultural climate of the mid-20 century. If we have missed the gre current of theological thought duri the last thirty years, he is likely to t us what to read (in theology, not ho iletics!) to catch up. And he does th in the name of homiletics, for it is great thought and literature that v find the seeds which germinate in sermons. Then, with illustration an example, he develops the ways t masters have been able to expre clearly what has been so clear in the minds. "An excellent treatment of shoddy idea will not make an adequa sermon; a passable treatment of a excellent idea will." But remembe idea and form are two parts of th same thing; then: "A man determine to preach his best has before him, lik any artist, a lifelong struggle wi form — to subdue it and make it serv his message."

Everything about this book is u usual and rewarding. No simple, ea methods here, but hard work — abou as hard as the work which so obvious went into the writing of these chapter Each chapter ends with a section calle "suggestions" which tells us what to d what to read, what to look for as w write.

So much could be said of and fo this book. It is good for anyone wh attempts to preach, but I suspect i will mean most to those who have bee at it for a few years. The author' empathy with "the preacher's plight is not only astounding; his clear an careful counsel is rewarding. — *Davi B. Watermulder, First Presbyteria Church, Oak Park, Illinois.*

Worship

PRAYERS FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP. *Com piled and edited by James Ferguson American editor, Charles L. Wallis Harper & Brothers. $4.95.*

PLEASE, please, please, do not ap proach this book with prejudice against its genre, as we did. Too many of us have learned to pick up books for public prayer and to se them down on the altar or the table with a sense of disappointment. Books for public prayer cannot be simply produced, simply written: prayers have to be lived in the com monness of Christian worship; they

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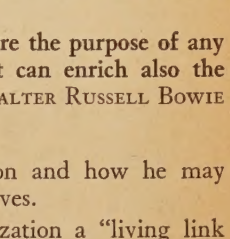

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have to be well-worn, eroded, smoothed through the ages so that mere novelty of expression and ephemerality are removed. They have to grow like folk songs grow, or be forged in the dark night of men's souls or be exposed in the bright light of joyful experience. You cannot sit down on Saturday night and decide to write enduring prayers.

The editors of this collection seem to know all this better than any of us could have known it. So in their compilation they have visited William Laud and Lancelot Andrewes, Ignatius Loyola and Walter Rauschenbusch, St. Augustine and Thomas a Kempis, Michelangelo and Thomas Aquinas. They have relied upon ancient liturgies: The Gelasian Sacramentary, the Roman Breviary, The Liturgy of the Catholic Apostolic Church, the Mozarabic Sacramentary, the Leonine Sacramentary, the Daybreak Office of the Eastern Church. For each Sund of the church year there is a morni office and an evening sequence.

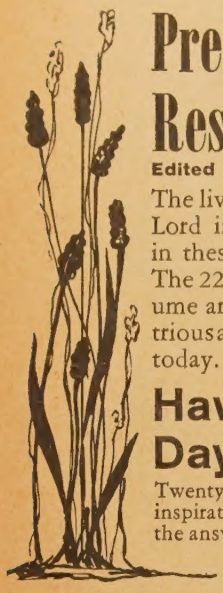
Conventionally these include a c to worship from the Scripture, o or two invocations and openi prayers, several pastoral prayers, offertory prayer, a prayer of illumi tion, prayers to follow the sermo To take one example, the offices f the forty-eighth Sunday of the ye In addition to the skein unwound the editor-authors, we have praye by S. T. Fraser, from the Book Common Prayer, by Matthew Hen by William Law, from the Mozarab rite, by James Martineau, by Lancel Andrewes and from Weimarisch *Gesangbuch*. The color and the ric ness of the prayers' origins remai yet in a witness to the unity of Chr tian worship one must say a comm expression pervades. Seldom is it ne essary to refer to a book of praye as indipensable. This one is.

WHAT IS LITURGICAL PREACHING? *Reginald H. Fuller. SCM. $1.2 (Available in America from Alec Allenson, 635 East Ogden, Nape ville, Illinois.)*

A GLANCE at religious advertis ments in any Saturday new paper should be sufficient witness confusion in contemporary preachin The novel, the passing, the spectac lar, the cute title, the sleight-of-han promise are panoplied to attract u wary worshipers. In the process th whole counsel of God, the rubrics an rhythms of the church year, and th basic needs of men's souls tend t be neglected. One solution to th problem is in the forthright retur to liturgical preaching. Reginald Fulle of Seabury-Western Seminary in Evan ston, Illinois, is a prophet of such return. Fuller is more critical of "to so" worship built around the sermo without a liturgy than he is of liturg without sermon. But both truncation are unnecessary; the service of th Word and the office of the Eucharis are integrally and organically relate Much of this short book is given ove to the fusion of actual examples o sermonic emphasis. "Who is sufficien for these things?" Before Fuller i ready to let us rely on "Our sufficienc is of God," he wants to be sure tha each has put forth the utmost of hi own effort.

EUCHARIST AND SACRIFICE. *By Gustaf Aulen, translated by Eric Wahl strom. Muhlenberg. $3.50.*

BISHOP Aulen here attempts a contribution at breaking the stalemate in current ecumenical dis cussion of the Lord's Supper. Stress on the Eucharist, the thankful re sponse to God's sheer gift in the Lord's Supper, has worried many in the ecumenical movement. Is this suf ficient response? Does it allow for the Christian community's taking up on itself the form of a servant? Stress



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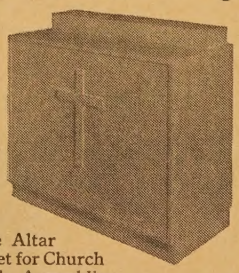

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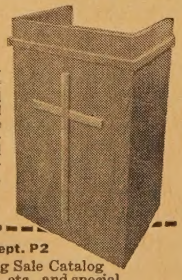

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n sacrifice, on the other hand, has isturbed those who see in it a reinroduction of medieval ideas of the nass, ideas against which the reformrs revolted. This book is worthwhile rst of all for the way it brings togethr the conference pronouncements of cumenical gatherings of the past, particularly from meetings on Faith and Order and the studies of intercomunion made in connection with hem. After particular concentration n several Anglican and Roman Cathlic statements, Aulen, a Lutheran cholar retreats to the Reformation. Ideas of sacrifice and particularly f the sacrifice of Christ himself exist n Luther but appear in the guise of lifferent terms to avoid the misuses ssociated with the mass. Aulen's surey of the biblical witness to the Lord's Supper concerns itself most of ll with isolating the picture of the acrifice of Christ and not the sacrifice f the people: "This is the one essential point, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Through his sacrifice perfected once for all He abolished all man-made sacrifices. A formula such as this, that we 'offer Christ' turns the Biblical kerygma upside down." Nor will Aulen permit ideas of sacrifice to be associated with views of atonement that are corollaries to theories of penalty and satisfaction. Here he returns to motifs he has earlier isolated: "The sacrifice of Christ is victory. The Lord who is present in the Lord's Supper and there deals with His church is the heavenly victor." A chapter on sacrifice and the Real Presence in current discussion on the Lord's Supper is particularly illuminating.

REFORMATION CROSSROADS. *By Harold H. Lentz. Augsburg. $1.75.*

THIS paperback is a lightweight contribution to the ongoing discussion of Melanchthon's relation to Lutheran theology. While Lentz is careful to disassociate Melanchthon from many of the cruder charges laid against him, there is no question but that on basic issues of Protestant theology he is convinced that Melanchthon took the wrong turn. His irenic and conciliatory character, his desire for Christian amity and unity at any price, his dulling of the sharpness of Luther's doctrine of the atonement and of justification by faith—all these make Melanchthon an unsure guide in twentieth century ecclesiastical concerns.

Written primarily with address to the situation within present-day American Lutheranism, Lentz's work will be less interesting to the general reader than Clyde Manschreck's study of the Quiet Reformer, recently published by Abingdon.

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Mar. 1 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 8 — 4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 15 — Passion Sunday.
Mar. 22 — Palm Sunday.
Mar. 22-28 — Holy Week.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 26 — Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 27 — Good Friday.
Mar. 29 — Easter.
Apr. 5 — 1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 12 — 2nd Sunday after Easter. National Christian College Day.
Apr. 19 — 3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 26 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 3 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 3-10 — National Family Week.
May 7 — Ascension Day.
May 10 — Festival of the Christian Home. (Mother's Day).
May 17 — Whitsunday (Pentecost).
May 24 — Trinity Sunday.
May 30 — Memorial Day.
May 31 — 2nd Sunday after Pentecost.

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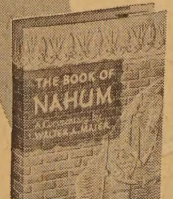

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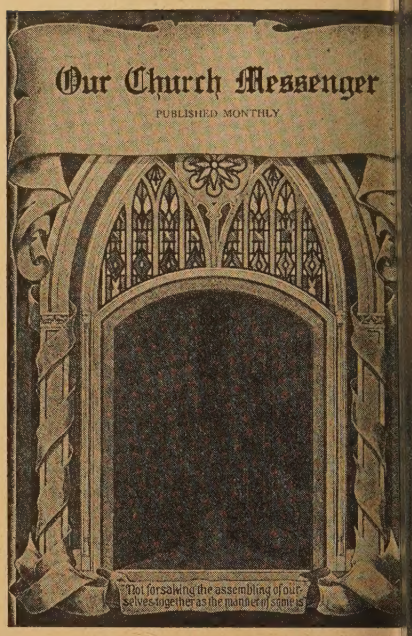

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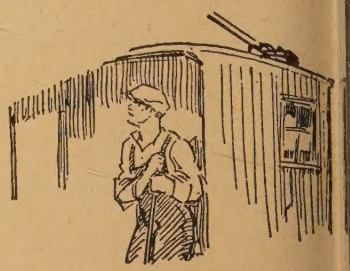

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